






Maj A Jackson U S A  
With respects

Lt B B Comm

Nov 1898

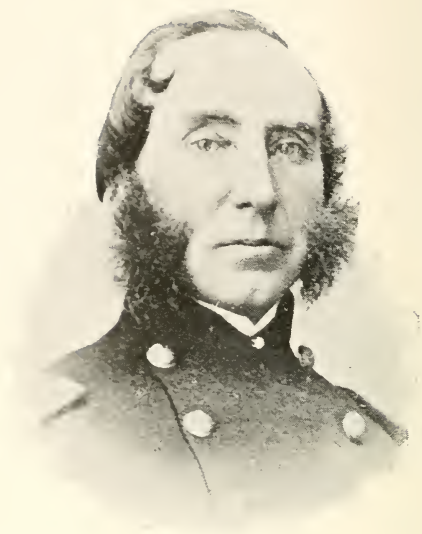






Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2010 with funding from

The Institute of Museum and Library Services through an Indiana State Library LSTA Grant



Lt. Col. B. (Common. Col. U.S.A.  
1861 A.D.

# PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

OF THE

## REBELLION

1861-1866

BY

LE GRAND B. CANNON

COL., U. S. A.

---

NEW YORK

1895

BURR PRINTING HOUSE, NEW YORK.

Dedicated to my Children.

---

*This volume is printed for private distribution among  
my family and friends.*





# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY .....	7
CHAPTER I.	
CAUSES AND COMMENCEMENT OF THE REBELLION.....	9
CHAPTER II.	
THE AWAKENING OF LOYAL SENTIMENT IN NEW YORK....	14
CHAPTER III.	
WITH GENERAL WOOL IN NEW YORK CITY.....	21
CHAPTER IV.	
WITH GENERAL WOOL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA..	45
CHAPTER V.	
THE EARLIEST EMANCIPATION AND USE OF NEGROES IN MILITARY SERVICE.....	54
CHAPTER VI.	
THE MONITOR AND MERRIMACK.....	75
CHAPTER VII.	
FIRST SERVICE OF NEGROES IN THE UNION FORCES.....	100
CHAPTER VIII.	
NEGOTIATING FOR AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.....	115
CHAPTER IX.	
THE REBEL POST-OFFICE AND PRISONERS' LETTERS.....	120

## CHAPTER X.

	PAGE
FLAGS OF TRUCE, SPIES, AND CONTRABAND ; VARIOUS INCIDENTS.....	126

## CHAPTER XI.

MCCLELLAN'S CAMPAIGN ON THE PENINSULA.....	144
--------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XII.

THE PRESIDENT AT FORT MONROE, AND CAPTURE OF NORFOLK.....	153
-----------------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XIII.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN.....	167
--------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XIV.

WITH GENERAL WOOL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE EAST..	176
---------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XV.

THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB AND THE REBELLION.....	185
----------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XVI.

AT LAKE CHAMPLAIN AND BURLINGTON.....	196
---------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XVII.

SOME OTHER REMINISCENCES AND PERSONAL EPISODES.....	200
-----------------------------------------------------	-----

## CHAPTER XVIII.

IN CONCLUSION.....	221
--------------------	-----

## INTRODUCTORY.

---

BEING now in the eightieth year of my life, I am induced to comply with the repeated urgings of my family and not a few of my friends, to make a record of my public life in the service of the United States during the Rebellion, and of my personal experiences with the military and civil powers of the Government. It has been a custom with the members of my family, which for near two and a half centuries has been identified with the progress of the country, to leave to their descendants something of a record of their lives and services, and to transmit to the eldest son of the senior line these mementoes of the family. By this observance I am the inheritor of the records of the family—Huguenot emigrants from France—and of the ancient family plate, used in the motherland three hundred and fifty or more years ago. In these circumstances and with an observance of this custom of our forefathers, I am influ-

enced to continue to my children such a record of some events in my life which may be interesting if not profitable to them.

The original letters, despatches, and orders connected with my military experiences and the incidents related in this book, together with other like personal documents and papers, are contained in a manuscript scrap-book bearing the title "Le Grand B. Cannon, Col. and A.D.C., U.S.A.; Letters, Orders, and Reports, the Rebellion, 1861 to 1866," which is in the possession of my family, and to which reference may be made.



# Personal Reminiscences of the Rebellion.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### CAUSES AND COMMENCEMENT OF THE REBELLION.

THE great embarrassment of the fathers of this country was in the effort to establish and maintain a system of government under two widely different forms of civilization, the one based on freedom and the other on slavery. The advance in wealth and population of the free States of the North over the slave States created a natural antagonism between the slave States and the free States, which intensified year by year with the broadening of the differences between the two sections of the country. The sentiment of the North in this direction was aggravated by the weakness and imbecility of the representatives of the Democratic Party of the North in being submissive to the demands of the politicians of the

South, and was further aggravated by the violation of the Missouri Compromise, by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, and by the attempt to impose slavery in the Territory of Kansas. All this resulted in a weakening of the Democratic Party in the North by the defection of the anti-slavery and independent element in it, and, finally, in the formation of the Republican Party, which practically absorbed the Whig Party and culminated in the election of Abraham Lincoln as President in 1860.

The election of Lincoln was deeply resented by the people of the South, and South Carolina took the lead in expressing the bitterness of the resentment, first by threats, and finally by the passage of the ordinance of secession, which was quickly followed by the passage of similar ordinances of secession by all the slave States excepting Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri, and Delaware, the latter having a strong loyal sentiment and the three former being occupied immediately by United States forces, which prevented any legislative act of disloyalty. The secession ordinances declared in effect that the Union was simply a confederacy,

and that these States passing the ordinances would separate themselves from the free States of the North and West, and establish an independent government. These acts were quickly followed by the seizure of Federal property by the South, and later by the firing on the flag of the Union and the capture of Fort Sumter, the first step in the actual Rebellion.

But there were other matters worthy of note that led up to this climax. After the election of Lincoln and previous to his inauguration, so feeble, imbecile, and disloyal was the then existent administration of President Buchanan that the public credit was prostrated. The Government was verging on bankruptcy and had not money to pay even the necessary expenses of administration. The Secretary of the Treasury, Philip F. Thomas, came to New York to negotiate a temporary loan of three million dollars to enable the Government to pay the current expenses of the administration. He was ready to submit to any terms. The banks of the city held a meeting to consider the matter, and so low was the credit of the Government, and so great the distrust of the administration, that

they refused to loan the money on any terms whatever. It was evident that the nation would become bankrupt, and a few thoughtful, patriotic men immediately after this refusal urged upon the attention of the banks, that if public credit were gone private credit would quickly follow, and that it would be policy to let the Government have the loan on any conditions, even if the money were lost. The banks then consented to make a temporary loan of three million dollars, at twelve per cent interest, on the express condition that the money should be used simply and solely to meet the current expenses of administration. The Secretary of the Treasury, a notoriously disloyal man, violated that contract by making a heavy draft to be deposited in a New Orleans bank. The bankers of New York advised the Government they would not pay any more drafts of that kind on this loan, and demanded, furthermore, that the Secretary of the Treasury, responsible for this breach of faith, be dismissed and a man appointed in his place in whom they could have confidence. Their protest resulted in the retirement of Thomas from the Cabinet and the ap-

pointment of Major-General John A. Dix as Secretary of the Treasury.

The Government wanted yet more money, and General Dix appealed to the New York bankers to show their confidence in him and in his loyalty by making a further loan. Their response was prompt and conclusive. General Dix obtained the money he needed at the rate of ten and a half per cent interest.

These facts are related as a necessary connection of events to show the lamentable condition of the country ; that the national laws were set at defiance in the Southern States, and that the national credit was practically destroyed. Lincoln assumed the office of President with all these embarrassments before him ; with an armed resistance to the law and a bankrupt Treasury ; with a North greatly divided in opinions and a solidly hostile South.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE AWAKENING OF LOYAL SENTIMENT IN NEW YORK.

THE effect of the capture of Fort Sumter by the South was immediately recognized by President Lincoln, and he at once issued his call for 75,000 troops to maintain the integrity of the nation. The call was received coldly in New York City. The city had very large business interests with and was a great creditor of the South. The banking interests, represented in a great degree by a foreign element, was naturally timid, or in strong sympathy with the demands of the South. So prevalent and aggressive was the disloyal sympathy, that the loyal men of the city were degraded by the term of "Black Republicans." There was practically no immediate public response in the city of New York to the call of the President of the United States. The only response was the order of the Republican Governor

of the State sending forward the organized militia regiments for the protection of Washington. The day after the President issued his call not a flag was visible in the city, and there was no public, patriotic response.

A few earnest, patriotic men, feeling that the Government should have immediate and adequate support, met in the office of Mr. Simeon Draper on the day following the issue of the call, April 16th, 1861. These men were Mr. Moses H. Grinnell, Mr. Milford Blatchford, Mr. Christopher R. Robert, Mr. Richard H. McCurdy, Mr. Samuel Sloan, and myself. They met to determine what action should be taken to support the Federal Government in maintaining the integrity of the nation, and to take steps to determine the public opinion and sentiment of the city.

Perhaps no better evidence of the dominant sentiment of New York City can be offered than the flagrantly disloyal act of the mayor of the city, Fernando Wood, in this crisis. Large quantities of arms had been ordered in the city by the revolted State of Georgia. The orders were filled, and the arms were in the course of ship-

ment when the police authorities of the city interposed and stopped them. The mayor apologized to the State of Georgia for this act of the police, expressed his regret, and excused himself on the ground that he had no power over the police force of the city, and could not prevent their action in the matter.

Furthermore, a regiment was being recruited in this city, in defiance of all law, to be used for the purpose of aiding the South in her resistance to Federal authority.

The meeting at Mr. Draper's office decided to adjourn to the house of Mr. Richard H. McCurdy, on Union Square, and met there again that same evening. There were a few other gentlemen at this second meeting besides those who first started the project at Mr. Draper's office. Included among these were Mr. William M. Evarts and General John A. Dix. It was determined that a public meeting of the citizens of New York should be called to declare their sentiments in support of the nation. Mr. William M. Evarts and General Dix were appointed a committee to draft a call. It was decided that the call should be on so broad

a basis that no loyal person could refuse to sign it. As adopted by the meeting the call was in the following words :

“ Citizens of New York in favor of maintaining the laws and Constitution of the United States are requested to assemble in Union Square on Saturday, April 20th, at two o’clock.”

As a matter of policy it was considered best that leading Democrats of the city should be prominently identified with the movement to hold the meeting. Mr. Samuel Sloan, an original Democrat, but an intensely loyal man, volunteered to get the names of leading Democrats subscribed to the call. The meeting adjourned to reconvene the following day at the rooms of the Chamber of Commerce, to learn what progress had been made.

Mr. Sloan appeared at the meeting next day greatly depressed, and stated that several leading men of the city, notably Mr. Belmont, Mr. Samuel J. Tilden, Mr. Royal H. Phelps, and others had refused to sign the call for a meeting in favor of the maintenance of the laws and Constitution of the United States.

There had been no expression of public opinion

in New York City in reference to the situation confronting the nation, and no medium had been provided for an expression of the popular will. The outlook was gloomy, and a pall seemed to fall upon the city. The various possibilities in the matter were discussed, when suddenly, as with a burst of inspiration, Mr. Simeon Draper, a very prominent citizen and a conspicuous member of the Republican Party, exclaimed :

“ Damn the swallow-tails ; let’s go for the ground tier ! ”

In a short conference between Mr. Draper and myself it was decided to send for one of his friends, Mr. Elder, a prominent, working politician, who had a large following in the lower wards of the city. When Mr. Elder came we explained to him our plan for getting an expression of public sentiment. He was to collect a considerable body of men—stevedores, laborers, and such people from about the docks—get a fife and drum and an American flag, and have the men, with the flag in the fore and headed by the fife and drum, march in procession from the Battery up Broadway the next day. Our object was to see what



would be the effect on the people generally of the sight of the flag thus borne, as a kind of patriotic proclamation of their loyalty to the Union, by this element of society. It was arranged that some of our party should be at Broadway and Wall Street to meet the procession, to take advantage of whatever might result.

All this was done as arranged. Fifty or sixty men gathered in the lower part of the city and started up Broadway in procession, a small American flag waving at the head of the column, the fifer playing patriotic tunes and the drummer beating a rousing accompaniment to the steps of the marchers. The curious procession immediately attracted great attention. Broadway was crowded. At the top of Wall Street forty or fifty gentlemen joined the procession and moved down Wall Street. The effect was electrical. All Wall Street emptied out and cheered for the flag, and in immensely augmented numbers the procession started for the *Journal of Commerce* office. That paper had been very disloyal, and a demand was made that the American flag should promptly be displayed on the building. There was but little

hesitation before the flag was hung out. Then the procession started for the office of the New York *Herald*, a dense mass of cheering enthusiasts. Long before the procession reached the office a dozen flags were flying from the building. Then a move was made on the office of the *News*; and so on until every newspaper in the city that had shown a hesitant or doubtful spirit had been compelled to display the Union flag. Within twenty-four hours the flag was flying from every church-steeple in the city, and the whole place was ablaze with patriotic enthusiasm.

Thus was the loyal sentiment of New York City aroused by the simple device of the flag.

The great mass-meeting in Union Square which followed was a marvellous success. The enthusiasm there aroused resulted in the formation of the Union Defence Committee, composed of the leading men of the city, in public and private life, organized to give all possible aid to the Government in its efforts for the maintenance of the Union with men, money, and material.

## CHAPTER III.

### WITH GENERAL WOOL IN NEW YORK CITY.

MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN ELLIS WOOL was at this time in command of the Department of the East, United States Army, with headquarters at Troy. Some time previous, and following closely on the secession of the Southern States, all General Wool's staff, with the exception of the late General Arnold, A.D.C., had deserted him ; had resigned from the United States Army and gone into the service of the Confederacy. Having served with General Wool, on his staff, many years before, he requested me to again become a member of his staff. I at once accepted, and on April 23d, 1861, was appointed Volunteer Aide-de-Camp to General Wool. General Wool also appointed as volunteer aides on his staff Mr. Alexander Hamilton and Mr. George Schuyler.

Major-General Scott was Commander-in-Chief of the Army, with headquarters at Washington.

The city of New York was cut off from any communication with Washington through the destruction of roads, bridges, and telegraph wires. There was no responsible officer of the Government in New York to muster in troops and provide for supplies, transportation, and the like. General Wool at once transferred his headquarters from Troy to New York City, and took command here a few days after the Union Square meeting. He at once began most active work, in co-operation with the Union Defence Committee, in mustering troops, securing supplies, and forwarding men. His prompt measures resulted in the providing of a military force at Washington sufficient to ensure the defence of the capital against the threatened attacks of the rebel troops from Virginia and Maryland. He was most energetic in fostering the loyal sentiment of the people of New York, making arrests of men who indulged in disloyal talk, and encouraging in every way the upbuilding of a patriotic enthusiasm for the defence and preservation of the Union. All this he, of course, did without any orders or authority from Washington. It was impossible to communicate with

the heads of the Government and War Department, and he acted, as he believed to be for the best interest of the country, on his own responsibility.

But his great success and consequent popularity aroused the seemingly not altogether disinterested disapproval of General Scott—disapproval encouraged doubtless by his son-in-law, Colonel Scott, Adjutant-General on his staff, a disloyal man, who left the service of the United States shortly afterward. General Wool was rebuked by General Scott and ordered back to Troy to re-establish his headquarters there. The very remarkable letter in which General Scott ordered General Wool back to Troy indicates that other than mere military reasons were prominent in inducing the action.

On his return to Troy General Wool addressed the following letter to me :

HEADQUARTERS OF THE EAST,  
TROY, May 4, 1861.

DEAR COLONEL CANNON : Presuming that you may be of service to the Union Defence Committee in New York City, I have to request that you will, until further orders, place yourself in com-

munication with them, to afford such aid and advice, unofficially, as may be requested, and report to me from time to time at this place.

JOHN E. WOOL,  
*Major-General.*

The highly important and interesting events of General Wool's brief command in the city of New York, and the whole of the circumstances of his coming, his work here, and his recall, are told in the following personal letter from General Wool to myself :

TROY, N. Y., July 10, 1861.

MY DEAR COLONEL : I have frequently been asked why I am not in the field battling against the traitors of the Union.

The causes may be found in the following condensed history of the services I rendered in the execution of important and responsible duties, assumed on my part at a moment of great peril to the country, and when the Federal Capital was in imminent danger of being taken possession of by the rebels from Virginia and Maryland.

You will recollect the attack of a Massachusetts regiment passing through Baltimore, which resulted in destroying several long bridges between Baltimore and Philadelphia, of divers railroad tracks, and cutting the telegraph wires leading from Washington to the North, prevented for six days any communication with the latter city and the Northern States. It was under these circum-

stances I visited Governor Morgan. I found him in a state of alarm for the safety of the capital, which he was apprehensive would be taken possession of by the secessionists. While with him he received a telegraph despatch to hurry troops with all possible haste to Washington. He also received a despatch tendering the services of Colonel Ellsworth's regiment, with a request to accept it, which he complied with at my earnest recommendation ; when I gave orders to Colonel Tompkins, United States Quartermaster at New York, to furnish transportation, and Major Eaton, Commissary of Subsistence, thirty days' rations to each soldier, for as many regiments as might be ordered by the Governor at Washington. I ordered that number of rations because the troops could only reach Washington by either the Potomac or Chesapeake Bay.

Governor Morgan left the same evening, Saturday, April 20th, for New York. I informed him I would follow on Monday. On the next day the Governor transmitted by telegraph the following letter :

NEW YORK, April 21, 1861.

*General John E. Wool, Troy, N. Y. :*

I am glad to learn that you will proceed to New York to-morrow to superintend the forwarding of troops from this and other States mustered into the service of the General Government. It is eminently proper that a high officer of the Army of the United States should discharge this important duty.

E. D. MORGAN.

On the same day I received the following letter by telegraph from Thurlow Weed :

NEW YORK, April 21, 1861.

*General John E. Wool, Troy, N. Y. :*

Understanding you are to be here, I deem it advisable from instructions I have from the Secretary of War, General Cameron, that you should be at the Astor House with me.

THURLOW WEED.

By Mr. Weed's letter you will perceive that I was expected to be with him at the Astor House, which I could not assent to from the circumstance that I had already engaged quarters at the St. Nicholas Hotel, to which place I had directed all letters, telegrams, etc., intended for me to be sent.

On Monday, April 22d, I proceeded to New York and took quarters at the St. Nicholas. Soon after my arrival Mr. Weed called on me and urged me to take quarters at the Astor House, previous to which I had been earnestly requested to do so by Mr. Stetson, to which I declined, and from the fact that it would produce confusion, as telegraph despatches were constantly being received from the Governors of States and other persons.

On the 23d the Union Defence Committee called on me, among whom were General Dix, Chairman ; Mr. Draper, Vice-Chairman ; ex-Governor Fish, Messrs. Evarts, Wetmore, Dehone, Grinnell, Blatchford, Marshall, Sloan, and others. They desired to know what I was prepared to do



in this hour of great peril to the country, the capital being in imminent danger of being taken by the rebels ; I replied anything that would save the capital, for the preservation of the Union depended on its safety. A programme was soon arranged, which I approved of in behalf of the United States, and immediately set about carrying it into effect. In this place it may be proper to say I reminded the committee that I had assumed a fearful responsibility, and that probably I would be the only victim, but under the circumstances I was prepared to make the sacrifice if by it the capital could be saved.

It must not be forgotten that at this time the citizens of the whole North, East, and West were in the highest state of excitement, from apprehensions that the capital of the Union would fall into the possession of the rebels of the South ; and in the city of New York they were ready to denounce the administration, and even threatened to overturn the Government and elect a dictator, because of the loss of Norfolk with the navy depot, which had cost many millions, and Harper's Ferry, where we had an armory for the manufacture of arms, and the Federal Capital in danger of similar fate ; and all, as was asserted, from the gross neglect of the administration to provide the necessary means for their protection.

It was under such circumstances, with all communications closed between Washington and the North, that I entered, in conjunction with the Union Defence Committee, upon the important

duties which the emergency seemed to demand. No time was to be lost, as it appeared to every one with whom I held conversation, in forwarding troops for the defence and protection of the capital. The whole country was organizing and arming with a determination to march to Washington. On my arrival at New York I found requisitions from the Governors of nine States for arms and ammunition, all of whom by my orders were furnished with a greater or less number of arms, and as many rounds of ammunition as could be spared. Prompt and energetic measures were adopted by myself as well as the committee to secure the capital. Ships were chartered, supplies furnished, and troops forwarded with the utmost despatch to Washington *via* the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay to Annapolis, steamers were sent to protect the ships from capture by two privateers reported to be off Cape Henry. All vessels carrying troops and supplies were either armed or convoyed to their places of destination ; in all which we were supported and greatly aided by Commodore Breese. The steamship Quaker City, after landing her troops at Annapolis, was ordered to report to Colonel Dimick, commanding Fortress Monroe, to prevent the transportation of cannon, etc., from Norfolk to Old Point Comfort to besiege that fortress, and also to look out for privateers and to protect our vessels going up the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay.

On the requisitions of Colonel Dimick I ordered

provisions, carriages, ammunition, and implements to Fortress Monroe.

Being informed that the troops at Washington were short of provisions, I ordered Major Eaton, until otherwise directed, to send by Perrysville to Annapolis 30,000 rations daily. All which was promptly, efficiently, successfully, and without any accident whatever executed ; and, as was reported, saved the metropolis from the ravages of war and capture by the rebels of Virginia and Maryland.

Instead of ordering arms to the Governor of Illinois, as applied for, I requested him to take possession of the arsenal at St. Louis. I also telegraphed ex-Governor Banks to assist the Governor in taking the arsenal ; and for the same purpose I sent a special messenger to the Hon. F. P. Blair, with the request that he would assist in securing the arsenal. With the return of the messenger I received the thanks of Mr. Blair for the interest I manifested in the people of the West ; and the Governor of Illinois telegraphed me that he had received from the arsenal 21,000 stand of arms and 110,000 rounds of ammunition, two 6-pounder guns and ammunition for the same. I also, upon application of the Governor, ordered 32-pounder cannon, carriages, etc., to be prepared at the Allegheny Arsenal for Cairo.

I authorized the Governor of New Hampshire to place the navy depot and harbor of Portsmouth in a state of defence without incurring any unnecessary expenses.

I also gave Governor Andrew permission to occupy the forts in Boston Harbor for the purpose of drilling and disciplining volunteers intended for Washington.

I gave authority to the Mayor and Common Council of New Bedford to erect defences on Clark's Point, for the protection and defence of the city and harbor, at the cost of the city, but to be surrendered up to the United States whenever required by proper authority. I approved of placing into Fort Adams volunteers for the protection of the harbor and town of Newport by Governor Sprague, of Rhode Island.

In order to ascertain if my services in connection with the Union Defence Committee met the approbation of the General-in-Chief, as well as the Secretary of War, I reported to Lieutenant-General Scott on April 23d and 25th what I had done and was doing. On the 25th I also wrote to the Secretary of War, when I informed him that I had transmitted to Lieutenant-General Scott several despatches of what I was doing without receiving any reply, and I concluded my letter by saying, "*I am extremely anxious to know the views of the administration and what it desires. I am running without rudder or compass.*" By this expression I intended to be understood that I was executing high and important functions without orders, but which the emergency required, the Capital of the Union being in imminent peril of being captured by Southern rebels.

Receiving no acknowledgments, *and anxious to*

*know how my conduct was viewed by the authorities at Washington, I sent a special messenger, Colonel Schuyler, Volunteer Aide-de-Camp, to call upon Lieutenant-General Scott, the Secretary of War, and the President, and to inform each and all the part I was performing and to obtain their replies. He was unsuccessful, and returned, after much trouble and delay on the road, on the morning of May 1st, and reported to me that he had been unable to obtain any information on the subject of his mission.*

To all which it may not be inappropriate to add that, while receiving, by request, a passing review of Colonel Ellsworth's Regiment of Zouaves on its route to embark for Washington, Major-General Sandford, with one of his staff, in a hurried and excited manner, presented me with an order from Governor Morgan forbidding the embarkation of the regiment, unless reduced to the number prescribed—77 to a company—and urged me to order the whole to embark, as no part of the regiment would go unless all were included. The regiment was escorted by 5000 firemen. The order of the Governor produced intense excitement. I replied to the General that I would not be the first to check the noble and patriotic enthusiasm of the citizens of New York. The regiment as it was should embark. This announcement caused the most enthusiastic cheering of the regiment, the firemen, and the tens of thousands of spectators, which continued long after the imposing spectacle had passed in review.

I have thus detailed the most essential part of the services which I performed in conjunction with the Union Defence Committee from April 23d to May 1st, inclusive, when late in the evening of the latter day I received a communication from Lieutenant General Scott, through his Assistant Adjutant-General, E. D. Townsend, in which he recommended that I should "return to Troy to conduct the ordinary routine duties of my department and for the recovery of my health, known to be feeble," when at the time my health was perfect, as it has been ever since. No sick or feeble person could have performed the services demanded by the universal uprising of the people of the free States, north of the border States, in consequence of the threatened danger of the Federal Capital by rebels from Virginia and Maryland.

The loss of the capital might lead to the breaking up permanently of the Union. It was this that caused an excitement that could not be restrained. The people rose in their majesty, determined, no matter what might be the sacrifice, to save the capital and with it the Union. Believing what every person believed, that the capital was in danger, and without being able to communicate with the authorities at Washington, I assumed the responsibility of carrying out not only the views and wishes of the Union Defence Committee, but those of the whole people of the North, which embraced no less the Federal capital than the whole Union.

On May 7th, after I had left New York for my headquarters, as required by Lieutenant-General Scott, I received from the Secretary of War the following letter, not, however, in reply to any letter from myself :

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
WASHINGTON, May 6, 1861.

*To Major-General John E. Wool, Troy, N. Y. :*

MY DEAR SIR : Appreciating as I do your long, able, and faithful services and loyalty to the cause of the country, I write merely to request that no requisition for troops or orders for their removal be hereafter issued without first communicating with this department.

You will, my dear sir, not consider this any reflection on anything you may have heretofore done, but merely to avoid any conflict of orders or confusion of arrangements, and that the department may at all times know the number of troops called out, and how they may be made available at the shortest notice without interfering with any previous orders.

With sentiments of the highest personal regard, and the strongest appreciation of your valor and patriotism, I have the honor to be,

Very truly yours,

SIMON CAMERON,

*Secretary of War.*

This letter I acknowledged in the following words :



HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE EAST,  
TROY, N. Y., May 9, 1861.

*Hon. Simon Cameron, Secretary of War :*

MY DEAR SIR : Be pleased to accept my grateful acknowledgments for your communication of the 6th instant. It is especially gratifying to learn that my conduct hitherto in relation to the affairs of the Union meets your high approbation.

Although I am aware that with the press of business you have little time to read letters, yet as my conduct in connection with the Union Defence Committee of the citizens of New York may not be perfectly understood or appreciated by all in authority at Washington, I avail myself of this occasion to present you with a condensed history of the part I performed in the forwarding of troops and supplies for the protection and defence of Washington, which at the time was reported to be in imminent peril.

To which I added a history of my action with the Union Defence Committee, as represented in this communication, with the omission of ordering Colonel Ellsworth's regiment to embark and a few others of no importance, and concluded my letter as follows :

“ It is reported in New York that I was engaged in making contracts for supplies of various kinds to further the objects of the Union Defence Committee, and that the reports have reached Washington. It is due to myself to say that I made no contracts of any kind whatever for the committee or in behalf of the Government. At



the request of the committee, however, I signed two charter parties for the ships. I understood the committee paid the expenses out of the city funds."

To this letter I received from the Secretary of War the following reply :

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
WASHINGTON, June 7, 1861.

*Major-General John E. Wool, Troy, N. Y. :*

DEAR SIR : I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th ult., and I beg you to believe that nothing but a desire to give that careful consideration, which I found myself unable to do, at an earlier moment, has delayed my acknowledging of its receipt.

You state that it is reported in New York that you were engaged in making contracts for supplies of various kinds to further the objects of the Union Defence Committee, and that these reports have reached Washington, and you explain the extent of your participation in the proceedings of that committee in regard to the contracts. This, I beg to assure you, was unnecessary on your part. No such rumors or reports have reached this department, and if they had would have received no consideration unfavorable to your character. Your own high personal character, as well as your patriotic devotion to the country and long-trying services in its defence, afforded a sufficient shield to protect you against idle reports and vague rumors.

After giving a condensed history of the part you performed in forwarding of troops and supplies for the protection and defence of Washington, and which, as you state, were performed without orders from any quarter, you say you reported what you had done and were doing to Lieutenant-General Scott, without obtaining any reply, and that you remained ignorant of the wishes of the authorities until you received a communication from the General-in-Chief directing you to repair to headquarters at Troy. You express an anxiety to learn whether the part you performed met the approbation of the General-in-Chief or the War Department; and though you do not expressly say that the letter of the General-in-Chief leaves you in doubt on the subject, your letter justifies this inference, and I therefore deem it but due to you to say that this department has no disposition to find fault with or make complaint of your conduct in the emergency to which your letter refers. On the contrary, it believes that you were prompted by patriotic motives, and that you did nothing but what you, at the time, were fully persuaded was necessary and under the circumstances proper. The order of the General-in-Chief could therefore not have been intended to reflect upon your conduct while acting in conjunction with the Union Defence Committee in the city of New York, though a self-constituted, but patriotic body.

In answering you thus frankly, in order to put your mind at rest as to the views of this depart-

ment, it is due to it, as well as to you, that I should add in the same spirit that you were ordered to return to your headquarters at Troy, because the issuing of orders by you on the application of the various Governors for arms, ammunition, etc., without consultation, a detailed account of which you gave in your letter, seriously embarrassed the prompt and proper administration of the department, and could not be permitted to be continued without a disregard of law as well as the disarrangements of its operations. This alone was sufficient to order your return to headquarters. Although the War Department had no disposition to find fault with your motives, unauthorized as were your acts, feeling assured that it was the result of patriotic motives, it was itself, in its ordinary course of official business, attending to the same matters through its properly authorized officers, and you, General, so experienced an officer as you are, must admit on reflection that it could not permit a continuance of operations so conflicting with its own, however pure and patriotic might be the motives which induced them.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

SIMON CAMERON,

*Secretary of War.*

The concluding paragraph of this letter, I must confess, surprises me. Indeed, I find myself unable to reconcile what is there said with the letter of May 6th. In this Secretary Cameron declares

he appreciates my zeal, long, able, faithful, and loyal services to the country, with the assurance that in saying what he did he intended no reflection on anything that I had heretofore done. In the letter of June 7th the Secretary says that I was ordered to return to my headquarters at Troy because the issuing of orders by me, on the application of the various Governors for arms, ammunition, etc., without consultation—a detailed account of which I gave him in my letter—seriously embarrassed the prompt and proper administration of his department, and could not be permitted to be continued without a disregard of law, as well as the disarrangement of its operations. “This alone was sufficient to order your return to headquarters.” He, however, believes that I was prompted by patriotic motives, and that I did nothing but what I at the time was fully persuaded was necessary and under the circumstances proper. The Secretary, while penning the causes which sent me to my headquarters, must have overlooked the fact that at the time I was issuing orders to supply the various Governors with arms and ammunition no communication could be had with the authorities at Washington, and therefore he could not be consulted. Nevertheless, I made efforts to consult him by reporting what I was doing to Lieutenant-General Scott, at the same time writing to him, anxious to know the wishes and desires of the administration. Finally, I sent a special messenger to Washington, who returned without obtaining any information on the subject.

But the Secretary says I seriously embarrassed the prompt and proper administration of its operations, and that it was itself in its ordinary course of business attending to the same matters through *its properly authorized officers*. (See Cummings' letter, which follows, for "authorized officers.") How could this be when all communications between Washington and the Northern States were prevented by the rebels in Baltimore? If, however, arrangements were made in relation to the movements of troops, or of arming the militia with reference to future operations in the field or the protection of Washington, as indicated by the Secretary, I, as commander of the Eastern Department, and next in rank to Lieutenant-General Scott, ought to have been notified of the fact. This would have been no less in accordance with the usual practice than it was due to the high character so frankly awarded to me in the several communications of the Secretary. Again, my experience in organizing and preparing volunteers for the field would of itself have been sufficient to have designated me for the services which the perilous state of the capital seemed to demand. I, however, received no orders in the case. To *hurry* troops to Washington was not sent to me, but, as it would appear, to the Union Defence Committee of New York and the Governors of States. The emergency demanded prompt action. It was called for by the free States of the North, from apprehension that not only the Federal Capital, but the Union was in danger of a total disso-

lution. The services which I performed were in accordance with the wishes and desires of the people of the States north of the border States, and approved and urged by Vice-President Hamlin, Governor Morgan, Senator Sherman, of Ohio ; Senator Chandler, of Michigan ; Senator Foote, of Vermont ; Senator Baker, of Oregon ; to which I might add all the Governors of the Northern free States. The requisitions on me of the various Governors were in consequence of not being able to communicate with the authorities at Washington. If I had failed or hesitated to perform what the whole country required, I would have been denounced for wanting in zeal and firmness, if not as an enemy to the country.

I received no instructions from the Secretary of War, and heard of none, except in the despatch of Thurlow Weed, dated April 21st, and what will be found in the following letter :

WAR DEPARTMENT, April 21, 1861.

*Alexander Cummings, Esq. :*

This department needs at this moment an intelligent, experienced, and energetic man, in whom it can rely to assist in pushing forward troops, ammunitions, and supplies. You are acquainted with the internal arrangement and connections of the railroads in Pennsylvania, over which, for the present, they will have to come ; and while I am aware that your private affairs may demand your

time, I am sure your patriotism will induce you to aid me even at some loss to yourself.

With this view I will thank you, in consultation with the officers of the army and navy, to assist in getting vessels or arranging with the railroad companies, for the accommodation of the troops, as fast as they are ready to march to their destination, and also to assist them in making purchases or other arrangements, and to communicate at the earliest moment any information of service to this department.

Very respectfully,

SIMON CAMERON,

*Secretary of War.*

The above letter was endorsed by me as follows :

“ Alexander Cummings will confer with Colonel Tompkins and Major Eaton, who will give such instructions as will enable him to carry out the instructions of the Secretary of War. He will also confer with the Union Defence Committee, who will employ him in the capacity and in the discharge of the duties indicated in the instructions of the Secretary of War.”

By examination of Secretary Cameron's letter to Alexander Cummings, Esq., it will be perceived that a civilian was charged with the execution of duties that properly belonged to the staff-officers stationed in the city of New York—viz., Colonel D. D. Tompkins, Assistant Quartermaster-Gen-



eral, Major Eaton, Commissary of Subsistence, and Major Thornton; of Ordnance, all capable, efficient, and prompt in the discharge of every duty required of them, and under my orders performed the duties assigned to Mr. Cummings. The railroads to Washington could not be used for the transportation of troops or supplies, owing to the destruction of bridges, etc., by rebels from Baltimore; hence they were sent by way of the Potomac and Chesapeake Bay. I ordered Colonel Tompkins to send two vessels to ply between Perrysville and Annapolis, for the purpose of transporting troops and supplies to the latter place as soon as it could be done with safety. Arrangements accordingly were made with the railroad companies, and General Patterson sent troops to Perrysville to guard that place. Therefore, as it appears to me, I in no wise interfered with any arrangements made by Secretary Cameron with Mr. Cummings. On the contrary, I think all that he expected of the latter gentleman was more than anticipated by the measures adopted under my orders. Why should Mr. Cummings be employed when we had staff-officers to perform the duties required of him?

In thus presenting my views in regard to my conduct while in connection with the Union Defence Committee, and in relation to the orders of Lieutenant-General Scott and Secretary Cameron, I would not be understood to complain of being sent to my headquarters at Troy, or of not being



ordered into the field to battle against the traitors of the Union.

The President having the power, has, of course, the right to judge of the fitness of officers for command, whether for the field or any other military position. But I think I have just cause to complain of being placed in the position I find myself, and for no other reason than I made efforts and furnished means to save the Federal Capital. In ordering arms and ammunition to be issued to various Governors, I did no more, and for the same reasons, than what the President has done. It was a "*necessity*" demanded by the whole people of the North, arising from the perilous state of the country, all communication with Washington being closed.

Therefore is it just that I should be confined at my headquarters, when the Union Defence Committee, with whom I was associated and who approbated my conduct in the most exalted terms, receive more than the thanks of the administration, without allusion to myself, for the forces that arrived so opportunely at the capital; that civilians should be appointed to take rank over me in the army, and that I should be refused a command, although named for one—as I am informed—by Lieutenant-General Scott?

Permit me to ask, is such loyalty and devotion to country to be spurned by this administration? I feel that the people of the North will not sanction such conduct, nor will they ever

abandon their best and devoted friend, who has never faltered in vindicating their interests, honor, or welfare.

Your friend,

JOHN E. WOOL.

*To Colonel Le Grand B. Cannon, Burlington, Vt.*

## CHAPTER IV.

### WITH GENERAL WOOL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA.

THE people of the East and West greatly appreciated General Wool's valuable work in New York City in behalf of the Union cause, and were very indignant that he should have been relieved from active duty. The general indignation was very prominently and powerfully expressed, and so great was the pressure of public opinion upon the administration, that General Wool was very shortly afterward called again into active service, and on August 17th, 1861, he was assigned to the command of the Department of Virginia, with headquarters at Fort Monroe. This was practically the most important command in the country. Fort Monroe was not only the greatest fortress, but it was ~~practically~~ the key to the entire Southern coast.

In the mean time the staff of the army had be-

come greatly reduced through the resignation of many officers who went over to take service in the forces of the Confederacy. It was a prime necessity that the staff be brought up to its proper strength and standard, and an act designed to accomplish this was one of the first military measures adopted at the extra session of Congress. The bill provided that the staff of the army should be increased by the appointment of officers nominated by Major-Generals Scott and Wool, with the approval of the President and Senate.

On assuming command of the Department of Virginia General Wool at once nominated me as a staff-officer, with the rank of Major ; and also nominated Mr. Alexander Hamilton, with the rank of Major, and Mr. William Jay, with the rank of Captain, with orders to report to him immediately at Fort Monroe. I reported to General Wool at once, and was assigned as his confidential aide and Chief of Staff.

Immediately after the secession of Virginia great numbers of fugitive slaves escaped and took refuge within our lines at Fort Monroe. There was great apprehension among the people of the

North that they would be overrun with negroes as a result of a war. The Federal Government had refused to take any decided action with reference to the fugitive slaves, and had endeavored to take a stand amounting to non-interference with the existing *régime*. It evinced a great timidity about interfering in any way with the slave question. It had rebuked General Fremont, in the State of Missouri, for protecting fugitives, and also General Hunter, in South Carolina, for proposing to make use of the fugitive negroes. So sensitive was the Government about meddling with the negro in any way, that no less than two hundred and fifty stevedores were sent from New York and the East to Fort Monroe to unload our transports and to do other such civil work, at a cost of two dollars and a half a day each and rations, while there were hundreds of able-bodied negroes sheltering in our lines and living in idleness at the public expense. The inpouring of fugitive slaves into our lines increased to such an extent that repeated requests were made to Washington for instructions as to what should be done with them. It would have been disastrous to

have repelled them from coming into our lines. The War Department refused to give any instructions, but, on the contrary, adopted a policy which seemed fatal in its bearings. The following incident will illustrate the situation.

An Illinois regiment, stationed in Maryland, was transferred to our department. General Dix was in command of the District of Maryland. A complaint was made by a loyal slaveholder that one of his slaves, a woman, had been abducted by this regiment and carried off to Fort Monroe. General Dix made a report of the matter to General Wool by the slaveholder, and stated that it was highly important that the slave should be surrendered to her owner. This was the first case of the kind that had arisen, and it tended to place General Wool in the position of surrendering the first fugitive slave. General Wool addressed a spirited reply to General Dix, saying that it was no part of his duty to find fugitive slaves and surrender them to their masters ; and, furthermore, suggesting that General Dix would have all he could do to perfect discipline and efficiency in his own command, without undertak-

ing to demoralize discipline in another department.

General Dix complained to the Secretary of War, Mr. Simon Cameron, saying it was of the last importance that the loyal people of Maryland who owned slaves should be protected in their property. He submitted the correspondence with General Wool, and suggested that instructions should be given from the War Department to General Wool calling for the surrender of the slave in question. In the course of a week the owner of the woman again came to Fort Monroe with an order from the Secretary of War. The communication stated that it was alleged this woman had been carried off by the officers of the Illinois regiment, and was held for purposes of prostitution. The Secretary ordered that the woman should be delivered up on the facts being established.

The slave-owner presented the order to General Wool in my presence. I saw at once by the expression of General Wool's face, as he read the order, that he was deeply incensed, and that there was danger of an explosion of ire that might lead

to serious consequences. In order to avert the trouble that threatened, I interrupted the reading by saying to General Wool :

“ General, I have something of very great importance to communicate to you immediately ; may I ask that this gentleman retire for a few moments ? ”

General Wool acquiesced, and when the slave-owner was gone I suggested to the General that he turn the matter over to me, and I would undertake that it should be satisfactorily settled, and that the slave should not be surrendered. General Wool assented to this, and calling the slave-owner in, told him that the matter had been turned over to me and was altogether in my hands. I told the man I would look the papers over, and asked him to come to see me later in the day.

Then I sent for the Colonel of the Illinois regiment which was accused of abducting the woman, explained the matter to him, and showed him the Secretary's order.

“ Now, Colonel,” I said, “ this is a personal matter with you. It is a serious reflection on you and your officers, as well as on your men ;



but, first of all, it is a reflection on yourself, and you see the inference that must be drawn if this man's statement is established. I leave the matter in your hands."

The Colonel saw the point at once. I called in the slave-owner, told him that the Secretary's order would, of course, be promptly obeyed. I endorsed the order to the Colonel of the regiment, instructing him to investigate the matter, and if the facts were proven as alleged, to deliver up the woman to her owner, and then sent the man with the order to see and settle with the Colonel.

When the slave-owner went over to the Illinois regiment he ran into a hornet's nest. The Colonel received him, read the order, the statement of alleged facts, and my endorsement, and then broke out in indignant denunciation. He told the owner that his statement of immorality in the regiment was a personal insult to himself, as head of the regiment, and would have to be settled with him personally. Then he sent for all his officers and read the statement and order to them. They received it as he had done, and within five minutes the astounded slave-owner had a dozen

challenges on his hands. He had no actual proof of his allegations, of course, and was dreadfully frightened at the turn of events. He tried to withdraw and offered every apology, and ended by writing out a full and complete withdrawal of his charges, and expressing the belief that he was mistaken and that the woman was not with the regiment. I saw the man next morning as he went aboard the boat that took him home, and he looked as though he had been sick with a severe attack of cholera morbus.

Shortly afterward I went to Washington with despatches and saw Thomas L. Scott, First Assistant Secretary of War. After delivering my despatches Mr. Scott suddenly asked me :

“ Why are not the orders of the department obeyed by General Wool ? ”

“ General Wool is too old and too good a soldier ever to disobey an order,” I replied. “ Besides,” I continued, “ I happen to be cognizant of all orders received by General Wool from the department, and I do not know of any that have not been properly obeyed.”

Secretary Scott recited the case of the fugitive

slave, and I told him I ~~happened~~ to know everything about that case, and explained that the order from the Secretary was turned over to the Colonel of the regiment involved and the matter fully investigated, and that the slave-owner had made a complete withdrawal of the charge. Secretary Scott said he understood that the man was bullied and coerced into making the withdrawal; but the matter was dropped.

That evening I dined with Secretary of State Seward, and I explained to him the whole affair, just as it happened. I told him frankly that the United States Army could not be used for the purpose of hunting down and returning fugitive slaves, and that a repetition of such an order as was sent to General Wool would cause the mutiny of every soldier in the army.

The order was never repeated, and the War Department withdrew from its position on the matter of fugitive slaves.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE EARLIEST EMANCIPATION AND USE OF NEGROES IN MILITARY SERVICE.

As the war progressed in the closing months of 1861 there was a continually increasing number of fugitive slaves coming into our lines at Fort Monroe. The number became so great that the fact of so many men, women, and children living in idleness in close contact with our troops exercised a very demoralizing influence on both negroes and soldiers, and serious difficulties of morals and discipline arose. The efficiency of the troops was in great danger of vital impairment, and the situation of the negroes was lamentable. The Government would do nothing in the matter, standing aloof from the whole question, as previously related. Under these circumstances of great embarrassment General Wool decided to institute a rigid investigation into the actual condition of affairs and the causes, with a view of

finding some solution of the very difficult problem of what to do with the fugitive slaves.

On January 30th, 1862, General Wool appointed Colonel T. J. Cram and myself a commission to inquire into this matter under the following order :

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA,  
FORT MONROE, VA., January 30, 1862.

*General Order No. 5.*

I. Colonel T. J. Cram, Inspector-General, and Major Le Grand B. Cannon, Aide de-Camp, are hereby appointed and constituted a commission for the purpose of making a critical examination of the condition of the persons known as vagrants or "contrabands," who are employed in this department under Department General Order No. 34, of 1861, in reference to their pay, clothing, subsistence, medical attendance, shelter, and treatment, physical and moral.

II. Chiefs of the several departments, their subordinates and employés, will furnish to the Commission such reports and information as the Commission may require to enable it to perform the duties imposed, the object being to do justice to the claims of humanity in the proper discharge of the grave responsibility thrust upon the military authorities of this department in consequence of numerous persons—men, women, and children—already congregated and daily increasing, being abandoned by their masters or having fled to this military command for protection and support.

III. The Commissioners will also examine into the condition of such of the foregoing specified class of persons as have been or are employed under Department Special Order No. 72, of 1861, and will further examine whether the several chiefs of departments have a sufficiency or an excess of employés or laborers to enable them to discharge with proper economy and efficiency and despatch their respective duties, and if a greater or less number than are now employed can be economically employed for these duties. It having been reported that the said class of persons known as vagrants or "contrabands" have not been properly treated in all cases by those having them in charge, the Commissioners cannot be too rigid in its examination in order that justice may be done to them as well as to the public service.

IV. The result of the investigations will be reported by the Commissioners to these headquarters as early as practicable, with such suggestions as the Commissioners may deem proper for the improvement of these persons, and the Commission is authorized to employ such clerical assistance as it may need to be detailed from this command.

By command of Major-General Wool.

(Signed)

WILLIAM D. WHIPPLE,

*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

Major William P. Jones, A.D.C., was appointed a member of the Commission a few days later.

Special Order No. 72 and General Order No. 34, referred to in the order appointing the Commission, were issued some three months previous, in an effort to prevent the irretrievable vagrancy of the fugitive negroes by compelling them to do whatever work was within their scope, and so as far as possible support themselves.

Special Order No. 72 provided that all colored persons known as "contrabands," employed as servants by officers or others at Fort Monroe, should be furnished with their subsistence and at least eight dollars per month for males and four dollars for females. So much of this money as might be needed for their clothing was to be applied for that purpose, and the remainder to be paid into the hands of the Chief Quartermaster to create a fund for the support of those contrabands unable to work for their own support.

General Order No. 34 designated the pay and allowance to be made to contrabands at work in the military departments at Fort Monroe, as laborers and the like. Able-bodied negro men so employed were to be allowed ten dollars a month, and negro boys were to be allowed five dollars a

month ; in both cases with one ration and necessary clothing. But this money was not to be paid to the negroes earning it, but was to be turned over to the Quartermaster to be added to the fund mentioned above for the support of the women and children and those other negroes unable to work. As an incentive to good behavior, however, each able-bodied negro was allowed two dollars a month, and each negro boy one dollar a month for their own personal use.

But while the intent and purpose of these orders, of preventing the negroes from becoming irredeemable vagrants and a complete public charge, was to some extent achieved, yet, as the wages of their labor was in no way under their own control, the condition of the contrabands was practically the same as when in slavery. Further, the investigations of the Commission showed that they did not, to any great extent, receive even the slight personal and individual reward and incentive of the one or two dollars a month provided in the order.

The Commission, after a most searching and thorough investigation, made its report on March



20th, 1862. The report covered the whole subject minutely, and entered into and explained every detail of the condition and treatment of the fugitive negroes. The Commissioners found that the negroes were suffering from many abuses, partly due to individual culpability, but mainly to the unfortunate system, or rather lack of system, in dealing with them, to the condition naturally resulting from the entirely new character of the situation by which the military command was confronted, and the attitude of the administration which had practically forbidden any effort at solving the problem.

It was at this fundamental difficulty, the crux of the whole situation, that the chief efforts of the Commission were directed, in trying to devise a plan by which "to do justice to the claims of humanity in the proper discharge of the grave responsibility thrust upon the military authorities of this department." The conclusions reached and the suggestions offered by the Commissioners were stated in the closing clauses of the report as follows :

“ SUGGESTIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR CONDITION.—Your Commission, after a careful review of the reports and suggestions accompanying them, and a personal examination of the condition of the people, also after an examination of the laws of Congress, together with the question of military necessity, are forced to the conclusion that the practical working of the system inaugurated is highly objectionable, mainly wrong, and now entirely unnecessary.

“ 1. *Want of Power*.—Without discussing the laws of Congress bearing on this subject, the question of State rights or anything covering the question of title—which are matters entirely to be determined by civil power—though all of which might, with propriety, be considered, if necessary, even by a military commission ; your Commission believe there is want of authority in Government to hold these people and compel them to be recipients of its charity.

“ 2. *Military Necessity*.—We suppose it cannot be urged as a military necessity to retain them, for identically the same voluntary labor can be obtained at as cheap or a less rate. It will hardly be denied that more is not performed by a person who has a voice in the wages of his labor than one who has not ; besides, the military necessity could not extend to the women and children, and those who are sick and infirm. The position of all would be one of quasi-slavery, without being compelled to do their full work.

“ But admitting the military necessity of using

those whose labor the military power requires, where is the authority for fixing a price by which others may employ them, using the wages of such labor to support those who do not or cannot support themselves?

“ The plan of giving the same pay to all alike is discouraging to the skilful, honest, industrious laborer, who fully earns his wages, while it only confirms the lazy and shiftless in their laziness. There is no motive for the industrious to labor with diligence in his regularly appointed task. No matter how great their industry or perfect their skill, they can gain no more than the slothful or unskilful; and if they are not absolute drones, they get as much as if they gave their best exertions to the task. There is no incentive to ambition, to improve themselves as good workmen. Is it just to make the industrious and single work to accommodate a fund to support the lazy man's family? It is no argument against these people's ability to provide for themselves, that under their discouragements they do not show an activity as great as the white man under the incentive of proportional remuneration; for if white men were placed in the same situation, who can prove the result would not be the same?

“ It is destructive to the energies of an individual or a people to assure them of charity whenever they apprehend difficulty. Witness the effect of Irish soup-houses and all socialistic institutions. Better by far to let one here and there fall by the wayside than to encourage the hope

that the Herculean arm of the nation is to be wielded in clearing their path.

“ 3. The demand for Government labor at this post is limited, but the Government would have, as its army advances, almost no limit to the demands on its charity. The system is therefore incapable of expansion, and cannot, from its very expensiveness to Government, be carried on with a much larger number. Is it well to establish a precedent for the benefit of an inferior race which has always been refused, and cannot be granted, to a superior race? and thus to establish a system that would be quoted against the Government by all parties—by its foes for its failure, by its friends for its expense, and by the recipients of its charity because it was not continued, and taught them to rely on a hope which could not be realized.

“ As a verification of the force of our argument, reference is made to the tabular statement under head VII., from which it will be found that for the months of November and December the number of rations issued to women and children and infirm brought the cost of subsistence on those who labored to thirty-three and one half cents per capita per day, and in the months of January and February, when, it will be recollected, these issues to women and children were very largely suspended, the cost of subsistence on those who labored was twenty cents per capita per day. This decreased cost of labor is owing entirely to a curtailment of this charity, which compelled

these people to rely on their own exertions, and yet no distress has occurred in consequence.

“ 4. Your Commission are assured by educated and philanthropic gentlemen that there is no necessity for any governmental charity to these people ; that the societies at the North will undertake to provide for all their proper wants in connection with their moral and intellectual culture. We earnestly recommend that it be left, as governments leave all similar demands, to the intelligence and generosity of the people. The Commission also recommend, as suggested under head VI., the use of the contrabands' quarters, near the fort, to be granted under the direction of a person who may be appointed as the superintendent, for daily schools for children and evening schools for adults and for Divine service on Sundays, providing that the hours selected for these purposes shall not interfere with messing and hours of labor for the men, and always subject to the military authorities. They also recommend, as indicated in VI., that a site be granted for the purpose of erecting a school-house and chapel, providing that all structures erected for them be built and sustained without expense to the Government, and to be removed whenever the military authorities require, without claim on the Government for such removal ; that all blacks or contrabands not in the employ of the Government, of officers, or others connected with the military service at the fort be removed—if they remain in this vicin-

ity—beyond Mill Creek ; that no more buildings be erected at the Government expense, except for the shelter of those who are in Government service ; that the wages of their labor be paid to these people for their own use and enjoyment ; prices to be determined by individual skill, industry, and ability, and regulated by supply and demand, or by any other standard system which governs the departments of the army ; as part of the compensation that each laborer receives one ration per day and quarters in all respects similar to the usage heretofore obtaining with white or black free labor.

“ 5. The Commission would earnestly recommend the appointment by Government or the Commanding General of a person, as already indicated, always subordinate to the military authorities, though unconnected with the military service, a man of elevated moral character, high, social position and intelligence, who would consent to serve from motives of philanthropy—such a person would be most fit—and recommend that the military authorities protect him in all proper efforts to improve these people physically, morally, and religiously, to inculcate the virtues indispensable to this end, such as honesty, industry, temperance, economy, patience, and obedience to all rightful authority, leaving out of the question their social and political rights, believing that these questions belong more properly to the Government.

“ 6. Your Commission would likewise urgently recommend the appointment by the proper authority of a Provost Judge, who, clothed with civil power and military authority, could protect these ignorant people from being abused in their persons and enforce the recovery, from all who employ them, of their just dues.

“ This officer is also indispensably necessary in this military department, in the absence of all civil law, to protect loyal citizens from continual marauding by the soldiers and negroes. All officers, soldiers, and attachés of the army who have had the services of these people should be compelled to pay them the wages of their labor by virtue of Special Order No. 72.

“ 7. Your Commission are aware that their suggested reforms conflict in a considerable degree with the present system, which was doubtless the plan of a benevolent and patriotic heart, and perhaps the best that could be devised for the time being. It was a new thing to all beset with difficulties and antagonisms on all sides, but, like all systems, requiring practical results to develop its weak points and time to remedy its errors.

“ In conclusion your Commission are conscious of having taken much time in the examination of this most delicate but interesting question, but feel a consciousness that they have founded their opinions entirely upon facts presented.

“ We, the undersigned Commission, have the



honor to be, with the highest consideration, your most obedient servants,

“ T. J. CRAM,

*Colonel Topographical Engineers,  
Inspector-General, and A.D. C.*

“ LE GRAND B. CANNON,

*Colonel U.S.A. and A.D.C.*

“ WILLIAM P. JONES,

*Major U.S.A., A.D.C., and  
Provost Marshal.”*

This report was drawn by myself, and it required no little effort to have my associates in the Commission sign it. Although naturally admitting all the facts obtained and the conclusions reached, they hesitated about signing the report to the Commanding General, influenced no doubt by a consideration of the rebuke which the administration had visited upon other officers under similar circumstances.

General Wool hesitated about adopting the report and issuing the orders it called for, because of the experience of General Fremont and General Hunter, whose attempts to deal practically with this question had not been supported by the Government, but, on the contrary, had been rebuked.

While the approval of this report by General



Wool was in abeyance the late William E. Dodge and the late John Jay came to Fort Monroe to see their sons, who were in the service. These gentlemen were, very prominent in public life, and possessed in a high degree the confidence of the people of the North, with whom they had deservedly great influence. They held different views of slavery, Mr. Dodge being an emancipationist and Mr. Jay an abolitionist, but both were men of intense loyalty.

It occurred to me to take the responsibility of confidentially reading the report to these two gentlemen, and asking their views as to how it would be received by the North and by the administration. I felt that if they approved of this line of policy their influence would be great with the administration in securing the latter's endorsement for it. I took Mr. Dodge up to my room and read the report to him, enjoining upon him profound secrecy. After reading it to him I also took Mr. Jay into my confidence, and read the report to him also. Both of these gentlemen, neither knowing that the other had seen the report, endorsed it in most enthusiastic terms, saying they

believed that it would solve the whole question of the negro's status. I then said to these gentlemen :

“ Your influence would be very great in getting General Wool to sign this report, and as you are to dine with us this evening, I believe that I can induce General Wool to ask you to hear this report read and to get your views on it.”

At the close of the dinner at headquarters that evening I went quietly round to General Wool and made the suggestion, that these two gentlemen were men of such position that their views on the problem before us and our suggested solution would be very valuable, and asked him what he thought of confidentially reading the report of the Commission to them. The General immediately assented to my proposition. In a few moments he ordered the servants from the room, and then requested me to get the report, explaining to Mr. Dodge and Mr. Jay that he wanted to have it read to them in order to get their views about it.

During the reading Mr. Dodge and Mr. Jay made frequent expressions of earnest approval,

and at the close both gentlemen, in a most emphatic and enthusiastic manner, urged General Wool to immediately approve it, for, they said, it would add more to his reputation than all of his military record, for he would have solved this great question which the administration had utterly failed to do. General Wool had explained to them, as of course they very well knew, that other officers had not been supported in their efforts to deal with the matter. But Mr. Dodge and Mr. Jay were so emphatic in their approval of the course suggested in our report, that General Wool finally said :

“ Well, gentlemen, I will approve this report to-night on one condition, and that is, that you will go with my Chief of Staff, Colonel Cannon, to the War Office with this report, and that you will induce the Secretary of War and the President of the United States to sanction it ; otherwise I cannot sign it.”

Both gentlemen replied : “ We will go, and will do as you desire with the greatest pleasure.”

I went up to Washington the next evening, accompanied by Mr. Dodge and Mr. Jay. We went

together to the Secretary of War. He read the report carefully, and turning to these two gentlemen asked :

“ What does General Wool want ? ”

“ He wants your approval of this report,” they replied.

The Secretary approved the report.

General Wool immediately issued to the department the following order, which defined the status of the negro, whether in military or civil service, and which practically, and in direct, immediate effect, emancipated the negroes sheltered in our lines at Fort Monroe.

This was more than nine months previous to the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Lincoln, and was a general order of emancipation without condition.

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA,  
FORT MONROE, VA., March 18, 1862.

*General Order No. 22.*

The Chiefs of the Engineers, Ordnance, Medical, Subsistence, and Quartermasters departments employing vagrants or persons known as “ contrabands,” by virtue of General Order No. 34, also all officers, sutlers, citizens, and others employing them by virtue of Special Order No. 72,

will forthwith report the names of such vagrants or contrabands, together with the names of any heretofore employed by them, to Mr. Charles B. Wilder, who has been appointed to superintend all things relating to and necessary to their welfare and condition.

The Chiefs of the several departments will furnish to the Superintendent, Mr. Wilder, a statement of the amounts paid and the amounts remaining due to each person so employed by them under the following heads—viz.:

1. Amounts earned by each.
2. Amounts paid in clothing to each.
3. Amounts paid in money to each.
4. Amounts earned for extra labor by each.
5. Amounts paid in money for extra labor to each.
6. Amounts due for extra labor to each.
7. Gross amounts due for monthly and extra labor to March 15th, 1862, inclusive.

In addition to which a return will be made embracing all labor performed by contrabands in the several departments anterior to Special Order No. 72 and General Order No. 34, and the amounts, if any, paid to them during the same.

Special Order No. 72 and General Order No. 34 are hereby revoked, to take effect on and after March 15th, 1862. Hereafter all wages earned by persons of African blood in this department will be paid to them for their own use and support, under such regulations as may be devised by the Superintendent, prices to be determined

by individual skill, industry, and ability, and regulated by the standard usual in such cases which may govern the several departments of the army at or near Fort Monroe. As a part of the compensation each laborer will receive one ration per day and quarters until otherwise ordered.

The fund raised by Special Order No. 72 and General Order No. 34, in the hands of Captain Talmadge or any other person, for the support of the poor and needy of the so-called "contrabands," will be used for that purpose, or any other purpose which may be necessary for their benefit or comfort, under the direction of the Superintendent, with discretionary powers, but subject to the approval of the military commander of the department.

(Signed)

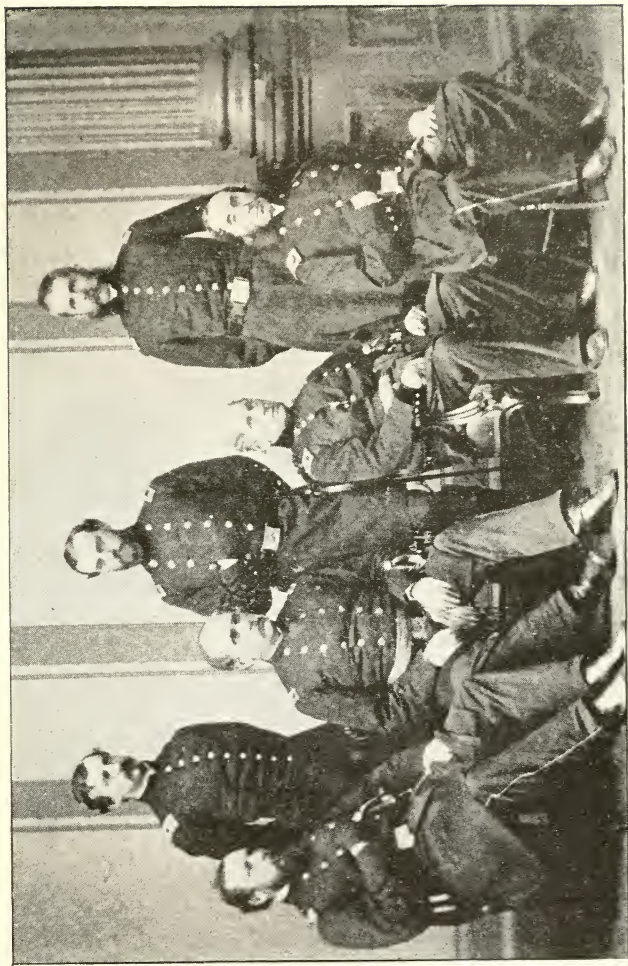
JOHN E. WOOL,  
*Major-General.*

Mr. Charles B. Wilder, who was appointed in the foregoing order as Superintendent of the negroes, was an abolitionist and a philanthropist, who had come down to Fort Monroe to look into the condition of the fugitive slaves. He was induced to accept this position, to take full charge and have the entire care of the negroes, and was made Quartermaster, with the rank of Captain.

The immediate result of the order adopted through our report was the dismissal of all the



GENERAL WOOL AND STAFF. PLATE I.



CAPT. JOSEPH C. AUDENRIED,      MAJOR LAWRENCE KIP,      CAPT. FRANK E. HOWE.  
 MAJOR JOHN B. FROTHINGHAM,      MAJ.-GEN. JOHN E. WOOL,      COL. LE GRAND B. CANNON,      COL. T. J. CRAM.





white stevedores at Fort Monroe. About three hundred and fifty negroes, mostly field hands, were detailed to take the place of the stevedores and to do other civil work about the post.

Two years after the inauguration of this new *régime* I received the following letter from Captain Wilder :

FORT MONROE, VA., March 14, 1864.

*Colonel Cannon :*

DEAR SIR : Having twice failed to see you when passing through New York, I take this method of expressing to you my most sincere thanks for the stand you so successfully took and carried through in the report made to General Wool, and which was approved by him, the Secretary of War, and Congress, and made the basis of nearly all our operations from that day to this in regard to the condition and rights of the colored people in this department. The position you took was in advance of public sentiment and the age, and is now being acted upon "without let or hindrance." Under General Butler we are getting on very successfully. All opposers of any kind have been removed. We have had several investigating committees from Washington and elsewhere, and all agree that, notwithstanding the opposition of enemies, the condition of the contrabands here is better than in any other department within their knowledge. The army has taken off nearly all

our able-bodied men, and all others we are getting on to rebel plantations, and soon expect they will become self-supporting.

I have the honor to be, Colonel,

Yours very truly,

C. B. WILDER,

*Captain and A.Q.M.*

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MONITOR AND MERRIMACK.

THE rebels were in possession of Norfolk, of the important Navy Yard at Portsmouth, of the mouth of the Elizabeth River, and all the defences thereabouts, and it was quite well known that they had taken the United States frigate Merrimack, had dismantled her, and were fitting her out as an ironclad. When the Norfolk Navy Yard was abandoned by Commodore Paulding in April, 1861, and was immediately occupied by the rebels, all the loyal men employed there left with him, with the exception of one man, an iron-finisher, who was from the East. He assumed to sympathize with the rebels and remained in their shops. This man managed to communicate with General Wool, through a flag of truce, and kept us informed of the progress being made on this new ironclad.

About the second week in February, 1862, an

Irishman appeared in the aides' room at headquarters in Fort Monroe, and asked to see the General. The aides asked what his business was, and not being able to get anything out of him, sent him in to me.

"I want to see the General," was all he would say.

"You can't see the General," I answered. "What do you want to see him for? Where did you come from, and how did you get into the fort?"

"Sure, I walked in, sor," he said.

"Of course you walked in. I didn't suppose you came in on a flying machine," I said. "How did you get by the guards? You can't see the General. What you have to tell him you must tell to me."

He protested that he could not do so; that it was as much as his life was worth. I threatened to have him locked in the casemate unless he quickly told his business, and finally he consented to tell me. I sent every one out of the room but the Irishman, and then, still protesting about the risk he was taking, he asked me to take my knife

and rip open the sleeve of his coat. I cut the cloth as he indicated, and found, on a piece of cotton cloth sewed inside the lining, a communication from the loyal workman in the Norfolk Navy Yard.

He said the Merrimack, rechristened the Virginia, had been launched, but it was found she drew a foot less water than they had intended. She was to receive another coat of mailing, and would be out in a month. Then they were ~~going~~ to attack and destroy the Cumberland and the Congress, off Newport News, which had been armed especially to meet her. Simultaneously General Magruder was ~~going~~ to come down from Yorktown and attack General Mansfield, at Newport News, and clean out all the Union forces in the neighborhood. The account of the rebel plans was most minute.

We relied on the loyalty of our informant, and General Wool, being ill prepared to sustain such attacks as arranged by the rebels, sent me to Washington as a bearer of despatches, to inform the War Office of the situation. On reporting at the War Office I found that Secretary of War

Stanton, who had just been appointed, was very ill. Second Assistant Secretary of War Watson received me. I was accredited as a living despatch, and I refused to deliver my despatches to Mr. Watson. He said Mr. Stanton was at home and could not attend to departmental affairs in his present condition. I said the despatches I bore were of the utmost importance, and that there were verbal messages to be given with them which I alone could give. We went to Secretary Stanton's house, and as he lay in bed I read my despatches and related the messages I brought as a living despatch.

Secretary Stanton at once appreciated what the consequences would be if the information was correct, and directed that I should be taken to the President. I saw the President, told him my mission, and he deemed the matter of such importance that he summoned a Cabinet council to convene at once. All the members of the Cabinet were present, including Captain G. V. Fox, First Assistant Secretary of the Navy, the active head of the department. Captain Fox heard my despatches, and turning to the President said :

“ Mr. President, you need not give yourself any trouble whatever about that vessel. I made a cruise in her, and know her well. She drew twenty-four feet of water, and this despatch says she only draws nineteen and a half feet.”

“ Well, Colonel Cannon, what do you say to that ?” asked the President.

I said that I could not give any professional opinion, but that it seemed to me the structural changes that had been made would account for the change in draft, but that, in any event, we had every confidence in the accuracy of our information, and were well convinced of the probable consequences.

But the Assistant Secretary of the Navy endeavored to make light of the whole affair, and to show that we must be entirely mistaken. Eventually the whole matter was dismissed, the opinion of the Assistant Secretary being taken as of more weight than anything we could offer. The Washington authorities were lulled into insensibility, and I had to return.

But the memorable events that followed in Hampton Roads quickly brought vindication, and

showed that the information I carried to Washington was accurate in all particulars.

I was an eye-witness of those events ; of the first day's onslaught by the Merrimack and of the duel between the Monitor and the Merrimack on the following day, being aboard the Monitor in my official capacity immediately before and after the historic fight. The story of those events, as I saw them, is told in the following extracts from a pamphlet entitled " Recollections of the Iron-clads Monitor and Merrimack, and Incidents of the Fights," written by me in October, 1875, at the request of the Hon. G. V. Fox, ex-Assistant Secretary of the Navy, and published by Captain Fox in the *American Cyclopædia* of 1876 :

" The Government, therefore, was not taken by surprise when the Merrimack appeared, though they were alarmingly startled by her first day's success, and greatly exaggerated her ability as a cruiser, as she had proved herself that day invincible against wooden vessels and their armament.

" The command at Fort Monroe being in winter quarters was naturally more interested in the active operations of the navy in the waters of



Virginia, and in the presence of vessels of war representing European nations. Flags of truce were frequent between Norfolk and Fort Monroe, and foreign officers were permitted to pass and repass between the hostile forces. The officers of two French corvettes, at anchor off the fort, availed of this privilege very often, and our staff-officers, on their return from such visits, made efforts to obtain information as to the condition of affairs at Norfolk, but without any measures of success. On Friday, March 7th, our flag of truce brought over three or four of these French officers. The next morning, Saturday, our signal officer's report to headquarters noted that the French corvettes were 'steaming up,' and as no notice had been sent the day previous that they were going to sea (to entitle them to a salute), the fact excited a suspicion that the Merrimack was coming out, and the Frenchmen, knowing it, were prepared to move, as they were at anchor in the line of fire.

"General Mansfield, commanding at Newport News, was telegraphed to keep a sharp look-out.

"About noon the Merrimack was sighted com-

ing out of the Elizabeth River, and steaming up the James River to Newport News. The Minnesota and Roanoke, screws, and the St. Lawrence, sailing frigate, got immediately under weigh, but both the former took the ground about two miles from Newport News, and could only engage the Merrimack at long range. The two latter vessels, after the loss of the Cumberland and Congress, returned to their anchorage below the fort, the Minnesota remaining hard aground.

“ Anticipating an attack by General Magruder on Newport News, General Wool ordered up the troops at Camp Hamilton to the support of General Mansfield. Rebel forces appeared and threatened an attack, but retired on the appearance of the supports. Captain Catesby R. Jones, in his article in the *Southern Magazine*, December, 1874, gives the reasons why Magruder failed to make the attack with the land forces, showing, conclusively, that the information received by General Wool in February, and sent to the War Office, was accurate in all particulars.

“ The Cumberland was at anchor about one thousand feet from the shore, under the guns of

a battery on the Bluff at Newport News (this battery mounted five or six guns, two of which were 6-inch rifles, and the others 8-inch Rodmans), the Congress being at anchor about the same distance below the Cumberland.

“ The Merrimack, in passing up, fired a broadside into the Congress, and continued on to attack the Cumberland. After firing a few shots she ran into her, striking her near the bow with her iron ram, and forcing in her planking and timbers below the water-line, from the effect of which she commenced sinking rapidly ; but although commanded to surrender, her heroic commander, Morris, refused, and kept up an active fire until the last, firing his guns till she went down with her flag flying at the peak. The Congress had in the meanwhile slipped her cable and drifted ashore, when the Merrimack, taking a raking position, attacked her with terrible effect, sweeping her decks and setting her on fire. Her commander, Lieutenant Smith, was killed, and to continue so hopeless a fight was simply madness. Her flag was struck and a prize crew thrown on board from a rebel gunboat.

“It is proper to explain here that the battery on the Bluff kept up a continuous fire on the Merrimack, and from its elevation—about thirty feet above the water—and at the short range the fire was almost perpendicular to the sloping roof of the Merrimack, but the effect of this battery’s shot was not damaging. General Mansfield also detailed a force of infantry to the beach, who kept up a sharp fire on the ports of the Merrimack. A section of artillery was also engaged in the fight, and on the Congress being boarded by a prize crew, opened on the prize with a raking fire of grape, which obliged the prize crew to abandon her. Then it was that the Merrimack reopened fire on the Congress, a circumstance which has led to no little controversy, but which finds its justification in the precedent of Nelson at Copenhagen. The Merrimack, after the loss of the Cumberland, opened fire on the shore battery and camp at Newport News, without much effect, although one of her shells demolished General Mansfield’s headquarters, half burying the General under the *débris*. Two of her unexploded shells were, after the fight, picked up, one of

which is in Washington and the other in possession of the writer.

“ During the engagement the Merrimack was joined by two armed steamers from up the James River, and all these vessels turned their next attention to the Minnesota, hopelessly aground about two miles below. The fire of the Minnesota kept off the wooden vessels, but the Merrimack continued firing on her at about a mile range until dark, but without inflicting much damage.

“ The whole aspect at headquarters was gloomy. The garrison was entirely composed of infantry volunteers, the armament was old-fashioned and of small calibre, and the experience of that day's fight showed that practically our batteries were as useless as musket-balls against the ironclad. Our magazines were shot-proof only from the sea side ; the parade in the fort was filled with quartermaster and commissary stores, with slight protection from the weather ; the barracks were of wood ; there were no means of extinguishing fire, and outside the fort an immense quantity of naval ammunition for the coast fleets, all utterly

unprotected, and with no means of removal to meet the emergency.

“ The success of the Merrimack gave her the control of the Roads, and if she could get sufficient elevation to her guns, she had the ability to shell and destroy the vast stores in and about the fort without the least power on our part to resist her.

“ Captain Van Brunt, commanding the Minnesota, through Lieutenant Grafton, first officer, reported at headquarters the result of their engagement, and as all efforts to get her afloat had failed, it was proposed to land a part of her crew (to save unnecessary slaughter), fight her to the last, and in an emergency blow her up. The surviving officers and crews of the Cumberland and Congress had been brought into the fort, and volunteered to serve our guns. The garrison was, therefore, reduced to about eight hundred men, the magazines from the bay side banked up with earth from the parade and made secure, and every precaution taken to stand a shelling.

“ About 9 o'clock P.M. Port Captain Milward reported at headquarters that the ironclad Moni-

tor had been signalled entering the Roads, and was dropping anchor at the Horseshoe. General Wool ordered the writer to take an armed tug and report to her commander the result of the day's conflict and the perilous condition of the Minnesota.

"I boarded her about 10.30 P.M., finding the news anticipated from the fleet, and Captain Worden, with an overworked crew from her perilous passage, was about lifting anchor to go up to the Minnesota. We remained alongside until she got under weigh, with her guns shotted and her men at quarters. She reached the Minnesota about 1 o'clock without seeing the Merrimack. Thus closed to us a sadly eventful day.

"Sunday morning (March 9th) opened with a low fog hanging over the waters. About 7 o'clock a column of black smoke was visible off Sewell's Point, and soon after the top of the smoke-stack of the Merrimack appeared. The fog dissipated, and a calm, cloudless, warm Sunday morning broke upon us, not a breath of air disturbed the waters, and the singular transparency of the atmosphere rendered objects distinct for a great distance from our elevation on the ramparts.

“ Immediately after the clearing of the fog the rebel fleet, consisting of the Merrimack, two side-wheel steamers, and two gunboats (screws), got under weigh, standing up the river, and opened fire on the Minnesota, the latter briskly returning the fire. The Monitor stood out under the bow of the Minnesota and bore down on the Merrimack, opening her battery at about half-mile range. The rebel wooden consorts soon determined that it was an entertainment they were not invited to, and took refuge under their shore batteries. Thus commenced this grand naval duel, witnessed by more than 40,000 armed men on either shore, no one of whom was insensible to the results of this mighty combat. The engagement between the ironclads continued at close quarters for about two hours, broadsides being frequently exchanged, as appeared to the observer, with the vessels almost in contact, and without advantage to either. After a close and rapid countering the vessels separated, the Monitor steaming up the river toward the Minnesota and followed for a short distance by the Merrimack, but soon stopped and was approached by two of



the consorts, firing meanwhile having been suspended. The Monitor remained out of action half an hour or more. With our glasses we could see men on her deck about the pilot-house, and, as afterward appeared, she had received a shot which broke one of the wrought-iron logs of the pilot-house, the same shot wounding Captain Worden. This injury was the cause of her retiring from action, but it was soon ascertained not to be vital, and she again bore down on the Merrimack. The latter, it appeared, had got aground, but floated before the Monitor came up with her. The Monitor re-engaged and forced the fight by lying athwart the stern of the Merrimack, delivering her fire rapidly and with telling effect, as with our glasses we could see that the Merrimack was settling by the stern. The Merrimack, unable to shake her off or to stand the pounding, commenced the retreat to Norfolk; then went up the excited exclamation of the officers on the ramparts, 'She is sinking!' and the apostrophe of the late Captain Talmadge (our Chief Quartermaster), 'She sticks to her like a king-bird to a hawk,' quaintly illustrating the intrepid action of

the little two-gun raft as she outfought a champion which twenty-four hours before convulsed the nation and astonished the world by her achievements. The Monitor pursued the Merrimack until she was brought under the fire of the rebel batteries, and then retired with her purpose accomplished.

“At the invitation of Captain Fox, Assistant Secretary, I boarded the Monitor before her decks were cleared. The ship’s company were mustered, and the Secretary made a brief and forcible address to the officers and crew, thanking them, in the name of the department, for their gallantry and success, and inquiring if any special act of gallantry had been exhibited. Lieutenant Green replied that all had done their duty, but if any one was conspicuous it was the Quartermaster, who had steered the ship and never left the wheel during the engagement, and was by Worden’s side when he was wounded. The Secretary ordered the man to step forward, complimented him on his steadiness and courage, and asked if he would like promotion. This young fellow was a Dane, singularly modest, and so overcome by

the recognition that he could not find his voice to reply. Lieutenant Green, seeing his embarrassment, repeated the Secretary's question, when aside and in a low voice he said something which Lieutenant Green repeated: 'He says, sir, he would like the master to give him a paper,' which, interpreted, means that he would like a written acknowledgment that he had done his duty. The Secretary replied: 'Yes, my lad, you shall have the paper, and you are a boatswain.'

"The Secretary received a verbal report from Lieutenant Green of the fight, and his impression as to the injury inflicted on the Merrimack, stating that the Monitor was ready to go into action again, excepting only strengthening the pilot-house. It was Lieutenant Green's opinion that the Monitor's charges and shot did not penetrate the armor of the Merrimack, and he asked if he should increase the charge and use the wrought-iron shot in case she came out again. The Secretary replied, 'You know Commodore Dahlgren has limited the service charge of the guns, and such are the orders of the department; but if I was fighting a ship and found my ammunition in-

effective, and had something better, I should try it in the emergency.'

"Thus closed March 9th, 1862, with a disaster of one day changed into a success which assured us a control of our waters to the end of the contest.

"The following day I went up to Washington as a bearer of despatches with the Secretary. His estimate of the fight was that it had been nearly equal, but had not the Merrimack retreated the Monitor would have sunk or captured her, and that the Monitor must be held to act strictly on the defensive until we had more of the same machines."

The following facts concerning the injustice done to Lieutenant Green in connection with the Monitor should be recorded here.

When the Monitor went out of action, because of the injury to her pilot-house and the wounding of Captain Worden, Lieutenant Green took command, repaired the damage, took her back into action again, and won the fight. In his report to Captain Fox he said that he would be prepared to

again go into action in three days, after the repairs to the pilot-house had been properly made. His success in the action with the Merrimack was so conspicuous that the staff officers of the army immediately invited him to a dinner in his honor, which he was compelled to decline, as he did not feel that he could leave his ship in the contingency of the Merrimack reappearing.

Yet with this undisputed record of his ability and success he was relieved of his command, and Captain Jeffers was appointed to the command of the Monitor in his place. The officers of the army felt that it was a grave act of injustice ; and it may be said that there were no officers of the navy familiar with the circumstances but agreed that it was unjust. For if such signal success did not warrant an officer continuing in his command, even if it did not call for promotion, what possible incentive could there be to stimulate the ambition of an officer in a military or naval command ?

Lieutenant Green doubtless felt that his services were not appreciated, by this failure of official recognition, and the circumstances no doubt had an influence on his after life ; and not unlikely

they were a potent factor in the sad causes of his unfortunate and untimely death.

It occurs to me that a brief history of the *Monitor* might be of interest in this connection.

Captain J. Ericsson, through a friend of his, a Mr. C. F. Bushnell, submitted to the Navy Department, very soon after the firing on Fort Sumter, a plan of a turreted ironclad of his own design. The idea was not received with favor by the Navy Department. The opposition of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy was especially conspicuous and influential. This man subsequently called the attention of certain members of the Naval Committee of the House of Representatives to Ericsson's suggestion, and succeeded in enlisting the support of Mr. John A. Griswold, a prominent member of Congress. Mr. Griswold became so much interested in the matter that he, in conjunction with Mr. John F. Winslow, induced the Navy Department to make a contract with them to complete the vessel, according to the designs.

It is especially due to the memory of the late

Mr. John A. Griswold and his associates, Mr. Bushnell and Mr. Winslow, to record that the Navy Department was extremely reluctant about consenting to the building of the Monitor, solely because of lack of confidence in Ericsson's invention. Its consent was finally given only on the conditions that the Monitor should be proved to be bomb-proof in a trial in actual engagement, and that it should be completed in one hundred days from the date of the contract. Governed strictly by patriotic motives, and with no selfish ends in view, these gentlemen assumed the risk of the construction of the new vessel.

It is a memorable fact, of which this is a notable illustration, that not a few of the signal successes of the Government in suppressing the rebellion, in arms and in political policy, were due to the intelligence and sagacity of loyal citizens not officially connected with the Government. No history of Ericsson's invention of the turreted war vessel would be complete if it failed to record the agency and the conditions under which the Monitor was built.

On her completion, the Monitor was immedi-

ately despatched to the Chesapeake River to engage a rebel battery at Sandstone Point in order to test her. She was practically at that time a private vessel, although manned by the Navy Department.

She appeared at Fort Monroe on the evening of May 8th, the day of the Merrimack's destruction of the Cumberland and the Congress. She put in there for a harbor, having encountered violent weather on her way down, during which she was barely saved from foundering by the greatest exertions. Her appearance at Fort Monroe on that evening, arriving there after such a day of disaster to the Federal forces, would seem to have been providential. As has been related, she went into action the following day, and for the first time in history a great duel between ironclads was fought.

It is especially notable that on one day there appeared one new type of warship—a vessel of ten guns, with a sloping roof of armor—which proved superior to any vessel or vessels in the navies of the world; and that on the following day another vessel, of an entirely different type—



also an ironclad, but with only two guns—appeared and proved to be superior to the first. I think it may be said with certainty that this was the most important event in the history of naval warfare of the world, as it led to the abandonment of all previous types of naval construction, and from that day to this the nations of the earth have been endeavoring to perfect another system of naval defences, at enormous expense, and generally with unsatisfactory results, for to this hour the question of floating defences against projectiles remains unsolved.

Up to this time the projectiles have kept ahead of the defences, remarkably verifying a notable statement made by the late Admiral Farragut, when dining with us at headquarters at Fort Monroe, as he was about entering upon his command with his small wooden fleet, to engage the forts on the Mississippi River, and if possible capture New Orleans. When it was asked of him by General Wool how he expected to overcome the two great fortifications on the Mississippi River, Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip, his reply was :

“ I don't want the forts, but I want the city

beyond the forts. And you and I know, General Wool, that great gun service is very uncertain of result against an object in motion. If I can get into action where I want to be, yardarm and yardarm, so close that I can use grape and canister, I will drive your men from their guns, because I can bring more guns to bear in a broadside than you have mounted in either barbette or casemate. We shall have the ironclad fever, but, General Wool, there never will be a vessel built that won't sink at her dock but that a projectile will have been invented superior to the defence." (In other words, a vessel carrying armor presumably sufficient to stop the projectiles could not go to sea, because of the weight of her armor, but would sink at her dock.)

To this hour Admiral Farragut's statement is true. He proved his theory (and it was original), and he did pass those forts. He said :

" If I can get one of my ships safe to New Orleans I can capture the city." He lost some of his ships, but one ship got to the city under Commodore Bailey, and the city surrendered without firing a gun.

This incident is related as a tribute to Admiral Farragut's sagacity and foresight in regard to naval defences and the power of projectiles.

The success of the Monitor, although apparently insignificant in itself as a mere duel between two ironclads, in effect gave us control not only of Hampton Roads, but of the entire Southern coast, and perhaps was the most important success during the entire war, except, of course, the final surrender of Lee at Appomattox.

## CHAPTER VII.

### FIRST SERVICE OF NEGROES IN THE UNION FORCES.

OUR experiences with the Merrimack convinced the army and navy officers that she was proof against all gun-fire. Even our two largest guns, then the largest afloat in the world, were ineffective against her, because of the peculiar formation of her sloping roof of armor. It was decided that the only way to destroy her was by ramming her. Some little time after the duel in Hampton Roads, early in the month of April, four big steamships—the Vanderbilt, the Arago, the Ericsson, and the Illinois—came down to Fort Monroe, to be in the harbor in readiness to attack the Merrimack if she came out and to destroy her by running her down.

All the steamships came down under sealed orders. Captain Gadsden, of the Arago, a merchant ship chartered for this service, on reaching

Fort Monroe and opening his orders, found that his ship was to be a ram. His crew in some way got to know the nature of the mission their ship was on, and the dangerous character of the work in which they were to engage, and promptly deserted in a body. The next morning Captain Gadsden found he had not a man aboard his ship except his officers. He went to the admiral of the fleet, stated his dilemma, and asked if the admiral could supply men to take the place of the deserters. The admiral said he had not a man to spare. But on examining his orders closely Captain Gadsden found he was commissioned under a military order, the vessels having been chartered by the War Office instead of by the Navy Department. Under these circumstances he applied to General Wool for help.

General Wool told Captain Gadsden he could not do anything at all for him. Instead of having men to spare he badly needed ten thousand more troops. In any case, he suggested, soldiers would not be of any use to supply the place of sailors in manning a ship. Captain Gadsden said any able-bodied men would do. He only wanted them to

keep the fires banked and to be able to roust up an anchor and do such like work ; his officers would attend to all the strictly nautical duties. But General Wool said he could not aid him. Negroes were the only people he had a surplus of, and he had nothing to do with them. " My Chief of Staff has everything to do with the negroes," he said.

General Wool brought Captain Gadsden in to me, and the latter related to me the condition of affairs. He said negroes would do for his purposes quite as well as white men, and asked me if I would give him fifty negroes.

" Yes," I answered, " I will let you have all the negroes you want under certain conditions."

" What are they?" asked Captain Gadsden.

" They must be volunteers," I said. " They must understand exactly the nature of the service expected of them, all its dangers and its possibilities, and must undertake it voluntarily, or they are of no use whatever to you. I cannot tell whether they will volunteer or not. No one knows what negroes would do under such circumstances ; no one knows whether the negro is any good or not

in conditions like these, so entirely novel to him. But I will make the experiment if you like. They must, further, be rated on the ship's books, and their standing must be the same as that of the crew which has deserted."

Captain Gadsden agreed to these conditions.

"What will be the pay?" I asked.

"Thirteen dollars a month and rations," he answered.

"All right," I said. "I think I can get men for you. You come to me at 12 o'clock. In the meantime I will see the Quartermaster in command of the negro stevedores, the best negroes we have, and will see what can be done."

I sent for Captain Wilder, the Quartermaster in charge of the negroes, and related the affair to him. I impressed upon him that the circumstances were most extraordinary and important. It was an entirely new condition we were confronting and trying to deal with.

"We do not know whether these negroes appreciate their condition and their present circumstances or not," I said. "We do not know whether the negro is good for anything except

what he has hitherto been used for or not. But if you can get fifty of these men to go on the Arago, I am especially anxious you should do so. I should like especially to know whether negroes can be got to take places in which white men would not remain. The enterprise is hazardous in the extreme. You get these men together at noon and see what you can do."

Captain Wilder said he fully appreciated the circumstances. "Come down yourself," he said, "and I think we shall be able to do it between us."

At 12 o'clock Captain Wilder had three hundred and fifty sturdy negro stevedores drawn up in double lines. Captain Wilder made an address to them. He said they had seen the great fight between the rebel ship Merrimack and the Monitor, and what a powerful fighter the Merrimack was. This great, strange ship, he said, was coming out again, and four big ships had come down to attack her when she came. Their work would be very dangerous, and when the crew of one of these ships heard what the work was to be they were such cowards they deserted.



“Now,” he said, “I want to know if you will take the places of these men. I want to know your worth to God and to your country. Who of you will volunteer to go on board this ship?”

Not a sign of emotion was visible on the countenance of any one of the negroes during Captain Wilder’s address. They stood like so many sphinxes. There was no response to his appeal.

I was discouraged and disgusted, for I was not prepared for such a thoroughly disheartening exhibition of indifference. But I decided to make an attempt myself to see if they understood just their circumstances, and had any appreciation of the nature of the opportunity thus offered to them. I addressed them, saying :

“I do not know what the result of this war will be in regard to your condition. I hope it will result in your freedom ; but you have got to commend yourselves to the people of the North by showing that you are worthy to be free. Some have got to shed their blood, others to lay down their lives ; for no great benefit has ever come to any people except through personal sacrifices. You have seen the battle which has been fought

between the Merrimack and our vessels of war. We have brought down four big ships to destroy the Merrimack by ramming her. The enterprise is a hazardous one, but it is one of glory. From on board one ship the white sailors have deserted because of the hazard of the service. It is my privilege to offer to fifty of you the opportunity to volunteer to go on that ship. This is the first offer of the kind ever made to your race. Every man who survives will be a hero, and those who fall will be martyrs. Now, those boys who will volunteer to go on board this fighting ship will move three paces to the front."

And the whole line moved up in a solid column, as though actuated by a single impulse. It was a thrilling response, and the most remarkable and impressive scene I ever witnessed.

We picked out fifty of the most likely men, and they were sent at once on board the Arago. They were escorted down to the boats by all the negroes round about, with shouting, singing, and praying, and every demonstration of exultant joy. It was a most exciting and inspiring sight.

I returned to headquarters very much elated.

I related the success of the scheme to General Wool, and told him what a vindication it was of the ideas embodied in the recommendations contained in the report and his orders concerning the fugitive slaves. I told him I had such confidence in the value of the negro as a soldier that I would, if occasion offered or circumstances required, throw up my commission and take command of a regiment of negroes with the greatest readiness and enthusiasm.

The volunteers put aboard the *Arago* proved themselves most apt and willing workers, and soon proved their value and justified our confidence in them. They were equipped as sailors, and when they came ashore the negroes in our lines almost worshipped them.

A week or two after this incident Captain Fox, First Assistant Secretary of the Navy, came down to Fort Monroe. I told him what we had done, and he was greatly interested and saw the men, and inquired fully as to their capabilities and value. Shortly afterward he issued an order that the fleets should be recruited entirely from negroes.

Thus were negroes, fugitive slaves, enlisted in the naval service of the United States, as free men and free agents, on the same footing as the white volunteers, nine months before the Proclamation of Emancipation by President Lincoln.

In looking back on the condition of affairs at that time, I am reminded of another important illustration of the real importance of the negroes, although we were then practically insensible to it.

Although we had a secret spy service of white men, we never really got any information of value through it. The only information which proved of notable assistance to us we got from the fugitive negroes. These negroes all passed through the rebel lines in escaping to our protection. Many of them had been servants of officers in the rebel army, and we got much information from them. One reason of its value was because of its simplicity. The negroes were ignorant, and never undertook to reason about matters. They told us what they had seen, simply as they saw it. By getting half a dozen fugitive negroes and questioning them closely we could usually find out

pretty accurately the force of the rebels, how many guns they had, and their conditions and positions.

The most valuable information we got in this way at Fort Monroe was about May 15th or 20th, 1862. A boat containing three negroes, a mulatto and two black fellows, was picked up in the Roads by one of our gunboats. The negroes said they had information they wanted to convey to headquarters, and they were sent up to us. They said they had escaped from Norfolk over night in the fog. The yellow man had been the chief porter in the principal hotel in Norfolk. He had, in some way, stolen duplicate copies of General Huger's military maps of the whole of the defences of Norfolk, which he turned over to us. These maps contained the fullest and most explicit information about the rebel position and forces. One of the black fellows with him had been employed at Sewell's Point, and the other on Pig Point, two of the most important of the rebel batteries. The mulatto man had got these two fellows to measure the calibre of the rebel guns and to count their number. Being ignorant

on the subject of gun calibres, they had simply taken sticks and cut them off the size of the muzzles of the guns, thus accurately showing the calibres. Their ignorant way of getting this information was much more valuable than probably would have been the attempted estimate of more intelligent men.

We would have given, at any time, one hundred thousand dollars for the information those three negroes brought to us. We attacked and captured Norfolk about a week after we received the information, and the success of the expedition was due entirely to the information the negroes brought, particularly to that contained in the duplicate maps brought to us by the mulatto man.

Several other notable instances came under my immediate observation of the great service rendered by the negroes in thus bringing information into the Union lines.

On my way to join General Wool's staff at Fort Monroe, I stopped in New York to complete my equipment and to secure a servant. A man named Benjamin Bowsman, a mulatto, whom I

had known as an officer's servant in the Florida War, came to me and asked to be taken into my service. He was then chief cook on the steamship *Arago*, running between New York and Havre. I told him at once that he was too high-priced for the position ; but he seemed intent on going with me, and asked what I could get a servant for. I told him twenty-five dollars a month. He said he would accept that willingly, and urged me to take him with me, saying he could no doubt be of great service in organizing the servants and in such like work. Finally I took him down with me, and we made him chief cook and steward at headquarters.

Some weeks later I had one day returned to headquarters late in the evening, and while at dinner I heard a murmuring, droning sound, as of some one reading, or perhaps of a prayer-meeting, in the kitchen across the hall. I asked Bowman next morning what was going on in the kitchen, and after a great deal of hesitancy he told me he was teaching school there evenings. I was much surprised, and on questioning him further found that he had for pupils one of my

servants, some of General Wool's, and the servants of several other officers. Most of these pupils were fugitive slaves. Bowsman confessed to me that he had brought down with him from New York some large alphabet cards and some elementary school-books, for the express purpose of teaching these slaves to read and write, he keenly appreciating the fact that power comes from knowledge, and that what his race most needed was education. This he had done in a most secret, surreptitious manner, feeling that the military authorities would not permit it if they knew of it. His chief object in desiring to go with me to Fort Monroe as my servant was to have this opportunity of teaching the negroes to read and write, and to educate them so far as he was able.

I was very much interested in this man's purpose and his intelligence, and I obtained an order that a building outside the fort should be assigned in which the negroes might openly have a school. I gave him money with which to buy the necessary books, and they were obtained and a school for the fugitives was established in a sys-



tematic manner. It was a most comical sight afterward to see every negro who could get possession of a school-book proudly walking around with the book showing conspicuously half-way out of his pocket, although in most cases the men did not know one letter from another. But eventually the schools started by Bowsman resulted in the ~~great~~ enlightenment of a ~~great~~ many of the fugitive negroes who came into our lines.

This man Bowsman's family made a remarkable record. One of his sons who was ambitious for advancement in life was befriended by Dr. Brinsmead, an eminent physician of Troy, who took him into his office and educated him until he was able to undergo an examination for admission to a medical college. An application in his behalf was refused by every medical college in the State of New York. Feeling an interest in this young man, and desiring his success, I wrote to Governor Andrew, of Massachusetts, telling him the circumstances. Governor Andrew immediately replied that if I would send the young man to Massachusetts he would see that he had an opportunity of having an examination. Young Bows-

man went to Massachusetts, and passed the examination with great credit.

After he had received his diploma I made efforts to get him into the service of the United States Army, but the request was denied by the Surgeon-General's Office in Washington. I then wrote to General Butler, who was on the James River, in front of Richmond, and told him the circumstances. He told me to send the young man to him, and he would see that he had a commission as Assistant Surgeon.

Dr. Bowsman reported to General Butler's command, and he developed so much merit that in less than a year he had risen to be a Brigade Surgeon. The brigade to which he was attached was mustered out of the service in Charleston, S. C., at the close of the war, and he remained in that city and secured a good practice in his profession. During the administration of General Grant he was appointed Postmaster of the city of Charleston, which office he filled to the satisfaction of all the people of the city, white and black. He was a mulatto, and in every respect a thorough gentleman.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### NEGOTIATING FOR AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

FROM motives of national policy the administration had steadily refused to recognize the hostilities with the South as a war, maintaining that it was simply a rebellion. It had assumed to treat the rebels captured on the high seas as pirates, and even proposed to try them for piracy. Doubtless the administration was influenced to take this position in order to prevent European nations from recognizing the South as a belligerent. Consequently the Federal Government had refused to accord to the rebels the treatment usual under the rules which govern civilized warfare between nations, and especially so in the matter of exchange of prisoners.

As is well known, our disasters and defeats in the first year of the war were great ; we had but few successes. As a consequence, the number of Union prisoners in rebel hands greatly exceeded

the number of rebels captured by us. A general feeling prevailed in the North that these prisoners in the South were being treated in a barbarous manner, and that they were suffering great privations and want. Doubtless this condition of the prisoners was due in part to the narrow resources of the South for providing for them. The feeling in the North that exchanges should be made became very embarrassing to the administration, but the pressure was resisted strongly on the ground that a yielding to it would embarrass our position with foreign nations. A potent element in our protest to foreign nations was that they could not recognize an independence which we had refused to recognize, and that any such recognition on their part would as certainly expose them to similar action in case they were in turn visited with insurrection or rebellion.

But notwithstanding the apprehension of foreign complications, the administration was finally driven to the appointment of a commission to negotiate with the rebel authorities for a basis of exchange of prisoners. General Wool, Colonel Cram, and myself were appointed Commissioners

on the part of the United States, and General Howell Cobb, General Huger, and Colonel Singleton were appointed on the part of the rebel government. We were to negotiate a basis of exchange and report to the Secretary of War for approval.

Our instructions from the War Office contained certain limitations, which it was extremely doubtful that the rebel government would accept. The administration declared that no one who had been in the civil or military service of the United States should be a basis of exchange. Of course these were the very first persons the rebels would demand, for their captured officers they especially wanted. Then it was insisted that all non-combatants captured should be paroled ; and, further, that every one mustered into the service of the United States should be treated according to the rules governing civilized warfare. This latter provision would, of course, permit the enlistment of negroes, to which the rebel authorities would naturally object.

Nevertheless we arranged for a meeting, which took place on a rebel steamer in Hampton Roads,

off Sewell's Point, on Sunday, February 9th, 1862. The details for a basis of exchange were carefully considered. We insisted that their two superior ranks of General and Lieutenant-General should be treated as of equal value in exchange with our highest rank of Major-General, contending that the difference was one of name only, as the forces commanded and the powers exercised by officers of our highest rank made that rank certainly the equivalent if not the superior of their highest rank. After a long discussion the rebel Commissioners agreed to our contention. Finally a general agreement was arrived at that the detailed conditions of the *cartel* should be the same as that which obtained between England and the United States in the War of 1812.

The Joint Commission adjourned to meet on the following Sunday to conclude the agreement, after reporting to their respective governments. Meanwhile, it was agreed that all prisoners held by either side should be immediately paroled, such parole to be observed until the regular exchange was effected. The prisoners on both sides were at once paroled under this agreement and

returned to their respective lines. All the Northern prisoners confined in Libby Prison were liberated under this agreement. This general release satisfied the demands of the loyal North, and the report of our action and negotiations was made to the War Office.

The joint Commission reconvened the following Sunday, and we then submitted to the rebel Commissioners the further limitations imposed by the War Office, as related above. The rebel Commissioners utterly refused to accept the conditions, as the exceptions were made entirely on one side. The result was that the conference was abruptly terminated. For a time personal exchanges were made, and in the end both sides practically accepted the usual conditions which governed civilized warfare.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE REBEL POST-OFFICE AND PRISONERS' LETTERS.

FLAGS of truce between Norfolk and Fort Monroe were frequent, and being often the officer in command, I had occasion of meeting quite frequently the very gentlemanly officer in charge of the rebel flag of truce, Colonel Singleton. I felt from his manner that he was by no means certain that he was pursuing the path of honor in his allegiance to the rebel cause, but he was nevertheless thoroughly honest in his support, and he enlisted my sympathies to no little extent, and as far as I could I was disposed to do him any personal favor.

No correspondence whatever was allowed to pass between the North and the South during the war but was opened and examined before it was sent in either direction, either into the rebel lines or into ours. We had at Fort Monroe a detail of aides and orderlies for this service.



Colonel Singleton, knowing that all letters were examined in the aides' room, on one occasion asked me, as a personal favor, if I would take a letter from a brother officer of his to a lady in the North, his *fiancée*, and asked if I would read it and forward it without its going through the aides' room.

I asked him, "Do you know the contents of this letter? Have you read it? If not, I shall have to request you to read it."

He said he had read it, that it was purely personal, and that it did not contain anything that might be in any way tortured into being considered contraband of war.

"Colonel," I said, "can I ask you, as a gentleman and a soldier, if this is a letter that can be forwarded, and that would not compromise me?"

"Certainly, sir," he answered.

"Seal the letter," I said, "and I will send it on."

"I expected nothing less," he replied. "Whatever favor I can do for you or any of your friends, command me."

He little thought in making this courteous reply

what a signal favor he would soon render, not to me, but to a great number of our prisoners in their hands.

Under the orders of the Post-Office Department of the rebel government, no letter could be sent to a prisoner of war unless accompanied by a five-cent piece, to pay the postage in the rebel lines. The people of the North, not knowing this, sent their letters with simply the Federal stamp. After examining the letters we pasted a slip of paper containing a five-cent piece on the back of each. No letters were sent by flag of truce into the enemy's lines that did not contain this required franking.

Colonel Singleton reported to me one day that there was a large number of letters at the post-office at Norfolk, which had been held there for some days or weeks because they were unaccompanied by this five-cent piece for rebel postage. I replied to him that not a letter had been sent into their lines but that a five-cent piece had been sent with it in the manner described. Of course this was embarrassing to him, as a rebel officer, and he said that it was not a matter he cared to discuss ; he simply told me of the fact.

We had heard of continued complaints from prisoners in the South that they never received letters from their friends in the North. I asked Colonel Singleton the number of letters lying in Norfolk. He told me, as I remember it, that there were some hundreds. I at once gave him what money I had with me, requesting him to pay the postage and forward the letters at once, and promising that I would forward him the balance, whatever it might be, on his letting me know the amount. This money—some three hundred dollars—I paid myself, and all the detained letters were forwarded.

Some little time afterward the rebel press at Richmond, a most disloyal and disreputable concern, stated that these letters had come over there without conforming to their post-office rules, and had finally been forwarded to the prisoners by the rebel government without charge.

Colonel Singleton was a member of General Huger's staff, and had reported my action to General Huger, and the General at once pronounced the statement made by the Richmond press to be false, and stated that these letters had

been forwarded at the instance of a United States officer, who had personally paid the expense himself.

Thus a little act of courtesy to Colonel Singleton led to his giving me this information, which resulted in so much satisfaction and pleasure to the unfortunate prisoners confined in Southern prisons.

Through the examination of mail passing the lines, not a few people in the North were compromised. In any case where the aides and orderlies charged with the work of examination deemed a discovery of contraband matter more than usually important, it was submitted to me to determine what action should be taken.

On one occasion a letter was received at Fort Monroe written by the late Mr. Samuel Barlow, of this city, to Judah P. Benjamin, then rebel Secretary of War. The letter stated that Mr. William H. Hurlburt, who was a prisoner in Libby Prison, having been captured at Harper's Ferry in the early part of the war, was entirely in sympathy with the rebel cause, and that he was so

outspoken in his expressions before he was captured, that his friends felt compelled to restrain him ; and the writer suggested to Mr. Benjamin that Hurlburt should be released. This letter was referred to me, and I made the following endorsement upon it, and sent it to the Secretary of State :

“ It appears to this command that so long as the rebels will keep this man Hurlburt in confinement, it saves us the necessity of doing it. It is further suggested that the author of this letter should be put under Government surveillance.”

## CHAPTER X.

### FLAGS OF TRUCE, SPIES, AND CONTRABAND ; VARIOUS INCIDENTS.

IN the early stages of the war we were very charitable in permitting people to pass our lines from the North to go into rebel territory. It seemed to have been the policy at Washington—perhaps a wise one—that all disloyal people in the North who desired to go to the South should have liberty to go there. The only gate open between the North and the South was at Fort Monroe, and the commanding General there had full discretion of giving or refusing permission to pass the lines. There were numerous instances of persons coming down there bearing requests from the State and War Departments to the commanding General that they be permitted to pass through.

A number of ladies of high social position, whose families were Southerners, and not a few of whom had been known socially by General

Wool in Washington, came down with these credentials, and were, of course, permitted to pass the lines. Some of these ladies returned later from the South, under a flag of truce, and a suspicion was excited that they were spies.

One lady in particular attracted my suspicion. She was an exceedingly attractive, fascinating woman, and a former acquaintance of General Wool. She came with a request from General Scott that she be permitted to pass the lines. She bestowed great attention on General Wool, and was profuse in her expressions of admiration for him in every way; and the General was by no means insensible to her attentions, as he had a certain chivalry toward the fair sex. Suspecting that this woman was a spy, I cautioned the General against her, but he resented my warning as an imputation on his sagacity, and as an intimation that he did not thoroughly understand all the ways of women.

But I was unconvinced of her innocence, and believing that she would return and request the liberty to go North, I decided to take measures to determine her purpose, and instructed the

Provost Marshal to be on his guard for her return.

Every person coming from within the rebel lines was compelled to report at the Provost Marshal's quarters, and to declare that they were not disloyal to the Government, and that they conveyed no mail or contraband of war. If their statements were distrusted they were compelled to submit to a personal examination before they were permitted to go North.

In a few weeks this woman reported to the Provost Marshal, having come over from Norfolk under a flag of truce, and received a passport permitting her to proceed by the steamer that night to Baltimore. Meanwhile two women detectives, wives of soldiers, had been put on board this transport as cabin-maids. A soldier detective, in citizen's dress, was also assigned to duty on the boat, and was especially instructed by the Provost Marshal to keep a watch on this woman.

In the course of the passage the soldier detective managed to introduce himself to the lady, and asked her if she did not come over with him in the flag of truce boat from Norfolk the day



previous. He apprehended that he would be detained, he said, and felt much relieved, as he was now on his safe passage North, thus intimating to the lady that he was in the rebel service. This apparent confidence of his inspired a confidence on the part of the woman, and she confessed to him that she also was in the rebel service.

The following morning, before the arrival of the steamer at Baltimore, this woman, on coming into the cabin, was accosted by the two detective cabin-maids, and told that she must submit to a personal search. The male detective was meanwhile secreted behind a curtain near by. The lady, with a great show of indignation, resented their demand, when the women seized her and the man came from behind the curtain and confounded her. She finally consented to a search, and nearly five hundred letters were found concealed in her dress and skirts. Furthermore, there was found on her a commission from the rebel government to her husband, in Baltimore, appointing him surgeon in the rebel army. The woman was detained on board the transport, and members of the Provost guard in Baltimore were sent to arrest her hus-

band, and then both she and her husband were returned to Fort Monroe.

The officer reported to me, and I reported the results to the General, and I have to confess that the General was a little indignant at my success.

On one occasion the Rev. Dr. J. P. B. Wilmer, then recently rector of one of the principal Episcopal churches in Philadelphia, and later Bishop of Louisiana, came to Fort Monroe with his family, desiring to pass the lines into Virginia. His wife was a Virginia lady, a Miss Skipworth, belonging to one of the influential and wealthy families of Virginia. Sympathizing with his wife's sentiments, he was intensely disloyal, and so outspoken was he in his disloyalty that his parish demanded his resignation. He was compelled to resign, and the bishop of his diocese refused to permit his being appointed to another parish within his jurisdiction. Under these circumstances, Dr. Wilmer desired to go into the rebel lines. The Government, in pursuance of its wise policy with disloyal and doubtful men, had no hesitation in granting his request.

He appeared at Fort Monroe with a request from the Secretary of State to General Wool that he be permitted to go to Norfolk. In the permit occurred the statement, "On business of the Government." On Dr. Wilmer delivering this request from the Department of State, General Wool noticed the endorsement and said: "You are on the business of the Government?" Dr. Wilmer protested that that was not so, and that he himself had objected to the statement being incorporated in the order. General Wool still felt that possibly he might be a Federal spy, and the order was issued to me, as bearer of the flag of truce, to take him to Norfolk.

We had instituted a system of declaring everything that we felt the rebels wanted to be contraband of war, and prohibiting its being introduced into their lines. A printed list of the articles so prohibited was made up, and as we learned from time to time that they were in need of any material, it was added to the list. It was customary to hand this list to every one who was going over. Notable among the articles prohibited were

money, silver, gold, or other valuables, arms, and gray cloth.

After getting under way, one of my orderlies presented the list to Dr. Wilmer, informing him that if there was anything among his luggage that was mentioned on the list it would not be permitted to go within the rebel lines. Dr. Wilmer had some eighteen trunks with him. After examining the list, he said to the orderly that he was not aware that he had anything contraband of war among his luggage, possibly supposing that his declaration was sufficient. Shortly after this he was requested to surrender his keys. Upon opening his trunks the orderlies reported to me that his baggage was filled with contraband of war. I proceeded to make an examination, and found that this was so. I felt not a little embarrassed and indignant that a clergyman of the church to which I was attached should have made so careless a declaration. I went to Dr. Wilmer and told him that I confessed I was surprised at his declaration, which was disproved by the examination, and informed him that I should have

to confiscate his entire luggage, without discrimination.

Another gentleman, a Mr. Washington, who was also going over, hearing my declaration, was very indignant, and denounced it as an outrageous act on the part of the Federal Government in making war upon innocent women and children. I demanded of him an immediate apology to me, as an officer, or I would put him under arrest and take him back to Fort Monroe. He made an apology rather speedily.

On meeting the rebel flag of truce to deliver these people, they protested at what they called the cruelty which I had practised, and Colonel Singleton, the officer in charge of the rebel flag of truce, suggested that he hoped I had not been harsh. I suggested to him that neither he nor any other rebel was a proper critic of my conduct, although our personal relations were friendly. Dr. Wilmer and his family were turned over to the officer, but all of their luggage was brought back to Fort Monroe.

This incident occurred a few days previous to

the meeting of the Commissioners appointed to negotiate for the exchange of prisoners. At the first meeting General Huger stated to General Wool that, without undertaking to judge of the merits of the case, he would like to submit to him that Dr. Wilmer's family were grievous sufferers for the want of clothing, and asked that General Wool would consent that some of their clothing, proper personal apparel, might be taken for the use of Dr. Wilmer's wife and her family. I immediately urged General Wool to grant the request. Dr. Wilmer was on board their boat, on which the meeting was held, and we took him aboard our vessel and brought him to Fort Monroe.

I had his luggage brought out and opened. He asked for three trunks of clothing. The poor man, when he came to examine the luggage, was so ignorant of women's apparel, that he really did not know what to take and what to leave. I assisted him, and determined to let him have everything that was not strictly contraband of war. I had the orderly repack trunk after trunk, Dr. Wilmer protesting that I was giving him a great deal more than he had asked, and I suggest-

ing that it was my responsibility rather than his, until I had given him fifteen or sixteen out of the eighteen trunks. For all this he was exceedingly grateful, his feelings of animosity at my seeming severity giving place to expressions of most effusive regard for my generosity.

In the year 1872 I visited, with my family, the city of New Orleans. In the mean time, Dr. Wilmer had been made Bishop of the Diocese of Louisiana. Going to church one Sunday and asking the sexton for seats, he gave us seats down nearly at the entrance of the church, where it was cold and draughty. It was in the winter season and very cold, and the church was not heated. There were very few people in the church, and I asked the sexton if he could not give me seats nearer the altar, which seemed to be vacant. He said those seats might possibly be occupied later by regular attendants. The church was so cold, that after the first or second lesson I got up to leave with my family, and remarked to the sexton :

“ You are not as courteous to your visitors here as we are to strangers in the North.”

Recognizing the rebuke, he said : “ I beg your

pardon, but if you will remain, I will look and see if there is anybody in the bishop's seats."

I said to him : " I think if the Bishop of Louisiana knew that I was standing in the vestibule of his church, I should be welcome to a seat."

He immediately took us and put us in the bishop's pew. After the service the sexton approached and asked if I would give him my address, which I did.

The following day I was called upon by Bishop and Mrs. Wilmer, and the meeting was a very pleasant and enjoyable one. They were afterward very attentive to us, and did everything in their power to make the visit of myself and family in New Orleans pleasurable.

The large hotel outside Fort Monroe, the Hygeia, was taken by the Government and used as a field hospital. A large number of soldier patients were in this hospital, many suffering from wounds, but more from malarious disease, and typhoid fever was quite prevalent.

Early one very foggy morning in the winter of 1862 an insane patient escaped from the hospital,



and clad only in his hospital clothing, rushed up to the drawbridge at the entrance to the fort. The sentinel on duty at the outer end of the drawbridge, across the moat, was so surprised and frightened at the appearance of the insane man, that he fled across the drawbridge into the fort crying, "A ghost! A ghost!"

The lunatic followed him, and the guard on duty were taken with the same panic as the sentinel, and they also fled before him. The lunatic entered the fort and was attracted by a staircase, which led up to the officers' quarters. He went up these stairs, and entered a room where an officer was dressing. The officer also was seized with panic, and in his efforts to get away from the lunatic, jumped out of a second-story window.

Having captured the fort, the lunatic proceeded on his way through it, with every one flying before him. He entered the quarters of Colonel Cram, of the Engineers, who also was dressing. Colonel Cram was a very self-possessed man, but he naturally was disconcerted at this violent entrance of a wild-looking man in his night-dress into his room. The lunatic carried a big bar of iron in

his hand, and brandishing this at Colonel Cram, he cried :

“ In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I command you to come with me. Your time has come !”

Colonel Cram, apprehending violence, interposed a table between himself and the lunatic, and replied with great coolness :

“ You will permit me to dress before I go with you.”

The lunatic replied : “ It is of no consequence whether you go into eternity dressed or undressed. You will go with me now.” And he followed up the remark by seizing Colonel Cram across the table. A terrific struggle ensued, Colonel Cram seizing the man’s right arm to prevent being struck with the bar of iron. The violence of the lunatic, and his unnatural strength, was overcoming the Colonel, when, with one vigorous effort, he threw the lunatic off and away from him, and managed to get possession of his sword. He drew his sword and was in the act of running the lunatic through when a file of soldiers rushed into the room and seized the man.

Thus was this great fort captured by a solitary lunatic. The incident resulted in a court-martial, and the sentinel was convicted and ordered to be shot. The sentence, however, was never carried out. The officer of the guard was suspended from duty for some time.

Early in January, 1862, a captain in the English Army, whose regiment was stationed in Canada, was sent by the War Department to General Wool with a notification that the officer had volunteered for the secret service as a spy, possibly actuated by a spirit of adventure, but with no unwillingness to securing pecuniary reward. The English being in high feather with the rebel government at that time, it was assumed that he would be received with confidence by the enemy. Receiving his instructions from General Wool, he was sent to Norfolk by a flag of truce.

Nothing was heard from him for a period of nearly two months, and we began to be apprehensive that he was in the rebel service and not in ours. In the latter part of February, however, he arrived at Fort Monroe by flag of truce from

Norfolk, and reported at headquarters. He stated that he had been cordially received by the rebels, and had just left General Beauregard's command at Manassas. Beauregard's command, he said, consisted of about thirty-eight thousand men of all arms. Stonewall Jackson was to move the following week with about seventeen thousand men, or one half of the command, through the Shenandoah Valley, and attack General Lander's command with headquarters at Harper's Ferry. Lander's force, of about ten thousand strong, was guarding the head of the valley, and was engaged in restoring the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which had been torn up by the rebels. His command was practically the right wing of McClellan's army.

The English officer was at once sent forward to the War Department under surveillance, and a copy of his report to us was also sent by a bearer of despatches, as we had not full confidence in the spy's integrity. His information was, however, fully verified by results. Jackson's force did move into the valley, attacking Lander and driving his forces out, in which action Lander was fatally wounded,

and died a few days after the battle in the house of his friend, Mr. John Fox Potter, M.C. These disastrous results, occurring with the War Office entirely informed of the movement, and with the ample forces at McClellan's command, begat in our department a general distrust of the War Office, and formed another of the amazing blunders and disasters in the history of the Army of the Potomac.

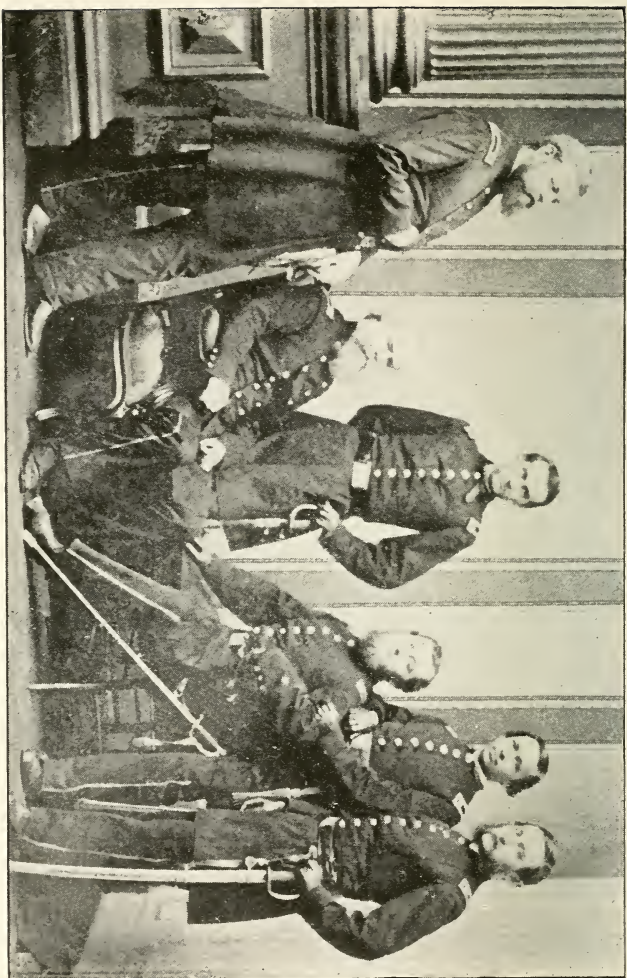
In 1866 Mr. Potter, then Consul-General of the United States at Montreal, visited me at Burlington, Vt. This gentleman was known as "Bowie-Knife Potter," from the famous incident of his acceptance of a challenge from the present Judge Pryor, of Virginia, and offering to fight him with bowie-knives with twelve-inch blades, the duellists to stand three feet apart, an offer which the fire-eating Virginian declined on the ground that the bowie-knife was a barbarous weapon. During Mr. Potter's visit I referred to the death of the gallant Lander, and told him that the War Office and McClellan were fully advised by the spy of Jackson's movements.

Mr. Potter with no little excitement then told

me that General Lander had been most loyal to McClellan, and that he had asked him, when he lay dying in his house, how the defeat had occurred. General Lander related that McClellan left Washington and came to his headquarters, knowing of Jackson's advance, and arranged with him to meet Jackson's forces; that Jackson's forces appeared in front of Lander's lines late in the afternoon, and that McClellan had made every disposition for the battle the following morning, McClellan staying with Lander at his headquarters. Lander left his headquarters and went to the front before daylight. Soon after Jackson's advance on his lines, and after an hour or two at long range, Jackson massed his forces, which were superior, and broke through Lander's lines, overwhelming and defeating him. Lander expected every moment that McClellan would appear and direct the movement, and that he would be reinforced from McCall's division, which consisted of eleven thousand men, and was within ten miles of him. But McClellan did not appear on the field. It appeared that he left Lander's headquarters about midnight without Lander knowing it, and



GENERAL WOOL'S STAFF. PLATE 2.



MAJOR C. T. CHRISTENSEN.

CAPT. DE WITT CLINTON.

LIEUT. WILLIAM C. RAWOLLE.

CAPT. JOHN F. S. GRAY.

SURGEON-MAJOR CHARLES MCDUGALL.

CAPT. CONCROSS.



went over to McCall's division, but did not order up any support, although McCall's forces were within sound of Lander's guns.

Mr. Potter, in reply to this statement by General Lander, said to him :

“ Your statement is almost incredible, General. How do you account for the matter ? ”

Raising himself in his bed, General Lander replied :

“ McClellan is a damned traitor and a coward. ”

And poor Lander died of chagrin more than from the effects of his wound.

## CHAPTER XI.

### MCCLELLAN'S CAMPAIGN ON THE PENINSULA.

MCCLELLAN'S inactivity in command of the Army of the Potomac and the defences of Washington, and his refusal to attack the rebel army at Manassas, induced the President to issue an imperative order that his forces should move. He then determined to change his base and advance on Richmond from the Rappahannock River. Subsequently he determined to make his basis the York River, the condition being made by the President that he should leave a sufficient force to ensure the defence of Washington. General McDowell was detailed in command of a force of 30,000 men to protect Washington.

McClellan's forces were then sent to Fort Monroe, by way of the Chesapeake, and he landed at Fort Monroe his first division of about 20,000 men under General Heintzelman. Gradually McClellan's forces advanced and took up a position on

the York River, at a point about six or eight miles from Yorktown, known as Ship Point, which had the advantage of an excellent harbor. All the additions to his army were landed at Ship Point, and there encamped to advance on Yorktown, then in command of General Magruder, and understood to be very heavily fortified. McClellan remained on board a transport at Georgetown for a fortnight after his troops had been sent down, and, as subsequently proved, he remained there, demanding of the administration that General Wool should report to him on his arrival in the Department of Virginia.

Although McClellan was Commander-in-Chief of the Army, he was inferior in rank, by date of commission, to Major-General Wool, and not only duty but etiquette demanded that he should report to General Wool, as ranking officer, when he came into his department. This was strictly a mere matter of vanity on the part of General McClellan, and embarrassed the administration greatly, so much so that the First Assistant Secretary of War, Mr. Scott, came to Fort Monroe with a view to reconciling these counter demands

of Generals McClellan and Wool. General Wool, with his usual sagacity and shrewdness, and having no confidence whatever in McClellan's military abilities, was insensible to the demand, and said to me, in confidence, that if General McClellan came into his department and did not report to him, he would put him under arrest.

Appreciating the jealousies that existed in the army, and the serious scandals that might result, I obtained leave of absence from General Wool, and went to Washington. There I called upon our two Senators from the State of New York, Mr. Harris and Mr. King, and also on two or three members of the House of Representatives who were on the Military Committee, and confidentially explained to them the condition of affairs. They were exceedingly indignant at this demand of McClellan's, and took me to the President. I explained the matter to the President, and suggested to him that General Wool was a man who had rendered great service to his country, was the oldest officer in the army, a Democrat, but intensely loyal; that the people of the North had great confidence in him, and that any

act to degrade him would certainly be resented. The President was very non-committal. He said that we must at once go and see the Secretary of War. He gave us a letter to the Secretary of War requesting him to see us immediately.

Before going to the War Office, I told these gentlemen that I had no business going to the War Office, as there was a general order that if any officer appeared in Washington except under orders, he was liable to arrest.

“Now,” I said to them, “if the Secretary is quick enough to see this, and suggest that I am subject to arrest, what am I to do?”

They said they would see that I was not troubled on that score.

“Very well,” I said, “I am willing to risk anything for the sake of the army.”

On arriving at the War Office, we found that, unfortunately, it was what was called “Congressional Day”—Saturday—a day on which the Secretary of War received Members of Congress who were soliciting him for appointments, promotions, and all sorts of things. The Secretary

was naturally of an excitable, irritable nature, and it was a very bad day for us to see him on the mission we were about. We were accorded precedence over all other callers, and were escorted into his private room.

The Secretary asked the object of our call. The gentlemen with me stated that General Wool was embarrassed to understand what were the desires of the War Office in reference to his command and to General McClellan's command. In great irritation, Secretary Stanton turned to me and said :

“ Can General Wool read English ? ”

“ Mr. Secretary,” I said, “ as your correspondence with the General has been rather extensive, it is hardly necessary for me to reply to that question.”

“ Are you a bearer of despatches ? ” he asked.

“ No, I am not, sir,” I replied.

“ What business have you in Washington or at the War Office, then ? ” he demanded.

“ I am here on leave of absence,” I said.

“ In that case,” he replied, “ you are violating

orders, and are under arrest. Report yourself at once to the Adjutant-General."

The gentlemen with me interposed in my behalf, saying that they had induced me to come, although I had protested that I had no right to be there.

Secretary Stanton said severely: "It is this constant interference with the army by Members of Congress that is demoralizing the service to a great degree. If Members of Congress would interfere less with the army, the discipline would be very much better and the results very different."

I left the room, and reported to the Adjutant-General, under arrest. My quarters were at Willard's Hotel. Adjutant-General Townsend said he was very much surprised to see me there under such circumstances, and asked what the trouble was. While I was talking with him an orderly came in and requested me to return to the Secretary of War. I returned with him, and the Secretary asked me:

"What more have you to say, sir?"

"Nothing more, Mr. Secretary," I said; "my lips are sealed under arrest."

“ You are relieved from arrest, then, Colonel,” he said.

Then I told him all the circumstances and conditions. I said that General Wool took the position that he had not any right to degrade his rank by reporting to his junior officer.

“ Just as certain as McClellan goes down there and does not report to him,” I said, “ General Wool will put him under arrest. Not only that, but he will be justified by any trial by court-martial. General Wool says this is very unnecessary, and he will not be humiliated or degraded. He recognizes the right to be relieved of his command, and if another officer, an inferior in rank, is appointed to relieve him, that would settle the situation. But if an imperative order comes for him to report to McClellan, he will resign from the service.”

“ General Wool has no better friend in this country than I am,” said Secretary Stanton, “ but if he resigns I will accept his resignation ; but I won’t relieve him of his command. I am not going to trust the armies of the United States and the key of the Union under the control of any one man.”



The conference then terminated, except that as we left the Secretary said :

“ When do you return, sir ? ”

I was ill at the time, and I said : “ I am on leave of absence, and am going to New York ; but as General Wool is going to be relieved, I shall tender my resignation. My service is a personal service rather than anything else. ”

“ I want you to dine with me this evening, ” said Secretary Stanton.

“ I will do so with the greatest pleasure, Mr. Secretary, ” I said, “ but I should like to go to my family in New York. ”

The Secretary then said : “ Your resignation will not be accepted. The department cannot afford to lose an officer by resigning who is serving his country under the conditions that you are. ”

In all my subsequent relations with Mr. Stanton, although his imperative manner was of a kind that begat irritation, he treated me with the greatest consideration and kindness.

The result of the negotiation was that the Secretary undoubtedly saw the President of the

United States, and told him that McClellan's demand was simply absurd, and an imperative order was issued to McClellan the very next day to join his command on the Peninsula and report to General Wool, which he did. He simply reported, breakfasted with us, and moved on to his command. His army had been kept for ten days inactive, solely to gratify McClellan's vanity.

Then followed the terrible series of disasters of McClellan's campaign on the Peninsula. Although he had command of a largely superior force to that of the rebels, he was practically beaten in every engagement; and finally, as is a record of history, he was compelled to abandon the Peninsula.

McClellan's forces—about 120,000 men—invested Yorktown, remaining in front of the city some eight or ten days, erecting works, without, except on one occasion, ever feeling of the enemy. The lines of investment extended from the York River to the James River, entirely across the Peninsula.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PRESIDENT AT FORT MONROE, AND CAPTURE OF NORFOLK.

WHILE McClellan was in front of Yorktown, the President and Secretary of War and Mr. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury—practically the administration—came down and took up their quarters at Fort Monroe, staying with us at headquarters. The evening of their arrival Yorktown was evacuated, and the enemy retreated upon Williamsburg, pursued by McClellan's forces. The latter had an engagement at Williamsburg with the rear-guard of Lee's army, and suffered severely, losing about 1800 men. The news of the battle reached Fort Monroe that evening, previous to the arrival of the President. The enemy meanwhile was retreating up the Peninsula.

On the party's arrival in a revenue cutter, I boarded the vessel and reported to the President the results of the engagement, for we had no

notice of his coming, and suggested that the party should come to headquarters within the fort, a messenger being despatched to the General, who came down with his staff to meet them and escort them to the fort.

The navy, in command of Admiral Goldsborough, had repeatedly refused to co-operate with us in making an effort to take Norfolk, and this was the real reason of the President and Secretary of War coming down, their object being to establish harmony of action between the army and navy. General Wool represented to the President that he could do nothing with his army, except he had a naval force to cover his landing upon the opposite shore. The result was that they proceeded off to the flagship at once, meeting Admiral Goldsborough with General Wool, and from there issued an order that night that the navy should go into action next day and bombard the forts of the Elizabeth River, Sewell's Point, and Craney Island. Wool said to the President :

“ If you will order the navy to co-operate with me, I will take Norfolk in three days.”

The naval vessels went into action next day, and in less than two hours silenced the forts. Then the Merrimack appeared for the second time. The naval vessels at once retired from action, notwithstanding the four large rams we had there for the express purpose of destroying the Merrimack. Nothing could be more humiliating than this exhibition on the part of the commander of the navy. So conspicuous was this irresolute act, that it caused the relief of Admiral Goldsborough from the command in a few days, and an order from the President that his war vessels should go up the James River and assist McClellan by bombarding the forts up on Drury's Bluff.

General Wool determined to make an advance on Norfolk, and had secured a large number of big canal-boats that had brought down the cavalry and mules of McClellan's command. On these he proposed to embark about 10,000 men and land them at a place called Pleasure House Beach, which was the most accessible point to the eastward of Norfolk, and to take the rebel works. General Wool's troops had never been brigaded,

and I sat up all night with him making details of the regiments that were to go. The information we had received was that General Huger had about 20,000 men in Norfolk, inside defences. I suggested to General Wool that as his troops were all new levies and had not been brigaded, and the amount of artillery he had was insignificant, our chances of success seemed very remote. It seemed to me the attempt would result in inevitable disaster.

General Wool asserted at once, with great confidence: "If I land, General Huger will run. Huger has been on my staff, and he knows I will never wet my feet."

"Suppose he does not run," I said; "we will either be driven into the sea or will have to surrender."

"It is not a supposable case," General Wool replied. "General Huger will evacuate."

I was the ranking officer on the staff at Fort Monroe. It is military etiquette that the highest ranking officer should be assigned as aide-in-waiting to the President. President Lincoln occupied my sleeping-room, while I slept on a stretcher in

the hall. As aide-in-waiting, I was practically secretary to the President.

I was utterly depressed by General Wool's confidence, which was not based on any consideration of military affairs and of the exact situation, but was purely a game of brag. On the following day, when General Wool was out reviewing the command that was going on the expedition, the President and Secretary observed that I was very reticent and depressed, and asked me what the trouble was. I avoided the question for some little time, but they urged upon me that I should tell them what was the cause of my trouble. I replied to them :

"I am going to do a very insubordinate act." Then I told them precisely what General Wool was about to do : that he was going to move the following night to attack Norfolk, purely on the belief that if he landed General Huger would evacuate the place. I said : "We have had so many disasters, that one coming now would be terrible, not only in its consequences to us, but fearful in its influence on McClellan's advance."

The President was thoughtful for a long time, and finally said :

“ Well, what do you suggest ?”

“ I have nothing to suggest,” I said ; “ but there is a remedy.”

“ What is it ?” asked the President.

“ Relieve General Wool of his command;” I said.

They knew my close personal relations with General Wool ; but this they were not prepared to do.

At dinner that evening the President asked General Wool how many men he was going to move with.

“ About 10,000,” said the General.

“ But,” the President said, “ has not General Huger nearly 20,000 men, and are they not behind fortified works ?”

“ Well, possibly,” answered General Wool ; “ but that is of no consequence. He is not going to fight. He will run if I land.”

Then the President repeated very much what I had said to him about the situation.

“ Mr. President,” said General Wool, “ you



are not a military man, and do not understand the situation. If you stay here forty-eight hours, I will present Norfolk to you."

The troops were embarked on the barges at nightfall, and very clever, skilful arrangements were made for landing them. Two or three of these barges, empty, were to be driven ahead by a tug with great velocity, and run right up on to the beach, bows first. Anchors and chains were immediately to be carried ashore to keep the barges in position. Then another barge was to be brought under the stern of these, in water sufficiently deep for others to come up alongside and disembark the troops.

\* Secretary Chase accompanied General Wool on the expedition, leaving Fort Monroe about 4 o'clock on the morning of May 10th. The troops had gone ahead in the barges during the night, and laid off near the proposed landing-place. I reported with my horse and orderly, to go on board, and the General at once asked me :

"What are you doing here, sir?"

"I am going with the expedition, of course," I answered.

“No, you are not going,” said General Wool. “I will take nobody with me who has any doubt of my success.”

“Am I to be humiliated, General Wool,” I replied, “in consequence of my confidential relations to you? If so, I shall resign from the service.”

“No,” he said; “you are left in command of the reserves and of this fort, and I will not trust any one else.”

“That is more monstrous than anything else, if you will allow me to suggest it,” I said. “I shall obey the order, but I must ask you to leave the Adjutant-General with me.”

The Adjutant-General was very indignant at being left, but it was so ordered, and he had to remain.

General Wool embarked, and all day long we heard nothing from him. At times we could hear firing and could see some smoke. It was a day of most fearful anxiety. The President and Secretary of War were almost overcome with their anxiety concerning this expedition. They could not but feel that they were in a measure responsible, as they had consented to it.

The whole day passed, and no word came from Norfolk. Evening set in, and when it got to be about 9 or 10 o'clock, I persuaded the President to go to bed in my room. I also persuaded Secretary Stanton to retire. He had a bed in my office. I went outside the fort with Captain Rogers, of the navy, and we went down on to the ordnance wharf. It was a beautiful moonlight night. There we remained, waiting for some news to come.

After a long time I heard a distant sound of paddle-wheels splashing in the water. The sound came nearer and nearer, and finally up came a little gunboat with General Wool and the members of his staff and Secretary Chase on board, and the news that Norfolk was taken. General Huger had run.

The excitement was wonderful. General Wool came up into the fort, and as we approached headquarters the sentinel challenged, "Who goes there?" The President heard the challenge, and the next thing we saw was six feet of white night-shirt at the French window.

"What is it?" asked the President.

“ General Wool, to present Norfolk to you !” I replied.

“ Call up Stanton, and send Wool up here,” he said.

I roused up Secretary Stanton, and told him, “ General Wool has returned, and we have taken Norfolk.”

“ My God !” he said, and jumped out of bed, and started up in his night-shirt to the President’s room.

President Lincoln was sitting on the edge of the bed. General Wool was there, in full uniform and all covered with dust, and one or two of his officers were also there. Secretary Stanton rushed impetuously into General Wool’s arms in his excitement, and embraced him fervently. The President broke out laughing at seeing the General in full uniform and the Secretary in his night-shirt clasped in each other’s arms, and said :

“ Look out, Mars ! If you don’t, the General will throw you.”

Secretary Stanton, with his usual quickness of perception and appreciation, said :

“ This is the most important capture that has

been made. Its importance nobody can estimate. You should immediately proceed to Norfolk, Mr. President, and issue a proclamation on rebel soil."

I got the Secretary some covering, and he sat down and right then and there wrote the proclamation for the President.

At 5 o'clock that same morning—Sunday, May 11th, 1862—we started on a gunboat for Norfolk. We took over President Lincoln, Secretary Chase, Secretary Stanton, and Admiral Goldsborough, who came on board. But we knew the Merrimack was there yet, and whether we could get to Norfolk or not we did not know. We had proceeded but a short distance when we heard a tremendous explosion. Looking in the direction whence the sound came, we saw that it was in the Elizabeth River. It proved to be the destruction of the Merrimack, which the rebels had blown up. Later, as we were going in, we passed over her wreckage.

Soon after breakfast we arrived at Norfolk, and found our troops in possession of the city. I mentioned to Secretary Chase on the way that it

was most important to make a strong political point there. Here at Norfolk there were large numbers of poor people and negroes, and a vast amount of property at the Navy Yard that ought to be preserved ; and I suggested that the military command should pursue a policy which would operate to cause dissension among the Southern people. Employment should be given to these poor people ; they should be taken into the service of the United States, which would naturally beget jealousy between them and the people of wealth, who were insignificant in numbers. Furthermore, we should pursue the same policy with the negroes there which we had adopted at Fort Monroe. Secretary Chase talked with me earnestly about the matter, and then went and talked with the President. Then he came back to me and said :

“ The President wants to make you Military Governor of Norfolk. We will speak to General Wool, if you assent to it ; and, no doubt, he will readily endorse the proposition.”

“ It is impossible,” I said. “ My health is impaired, and, furthermore, my duties are almost

entirely advisory, executive rather than military."

"That is what we want more than anything else in the army," said the Secretary; "and the President wants you to take this post."

But I utterly refused the offer. Later, when I went up to Washington with President Lincoln, Secretary Chase, and Secretary Stanton, Secretary Chase again urged the matter on me.

I said: "I must go home to my family, some of whom are ill."

"Well, bring your family here, and take up your quarters at Fort Norfolk," he said. It was, he urged, the first place where we could impress upon the people of the South that if they wanted Federal protection, they must recognize Federal authority. Finally, to get rid of their importunity, I said I would go home and would take the matter under consideration, and would advise them of my decision. Secretary Chase said:

"If you will take this position, and should find that you have occasion to go home, temporarily, I will come down myself and relieve you of the command until your return. I particularly desire

that you should accept it, because of its great importance, and because of our perfect accord in regard to the position."

I returned to New York, but having suffered from malarious trouble for some time, and being then far from well, I was influenced by my family and physician to utterly decline the proffered post, and to tender my resignation from the service.

I sent in my resignation, and it was accepted on June 11th, 1862.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

A SHORT time after we had started on the way to Norfolk, on May 11th, breakfast was served, and I went to find the President to notify him. I found he had sought a private place behind the wheel-house, where he was seated reading the Bible.

During breakfast President Lincoln said :

“ Now, Mr. Chase, you know we have been solicited by artists to fill the panels at the Capitol with pictures illustrative of this war. I don't think anything has been done on our side until the capture of Norfolk worthy of illustration. But now you can send for artist Leitze, and tell him to illustrate the taking of Norfolk. It should be illustrated by a picture showing the meeting of the Secretary of War and General Wool, on the announcement of the capture.”

The President's joke was keenly appreciated. This story of the President suggests his well-known trait of frequent indulgence in good-natured but shrewd humor. I had occasion of seeing much of this side of President Lincoln's character.

On one occasion, previous to the incidents related above, I had been ordered off very early in the morning to our advanced lines with reference to advancing them on the Peninsula, and did not return until very late in the evening, close upon the hour for dinner. Dinner was a very formal affair, and this evening we had for guests, as well as the President and Secretaries, some admirals of the foreign fleets then anchored in the Roads. Marquis de Montagnac, Admiral of the French fleet, was one of the guests. I had hastened to get into full dress, and could only dress in my private room, which the President then occupied. While I was dressing the President came in, and he said :

“ Why, I think you are making rather an elaborate toilet, Colonel.”

“Of course,” I said. “In such presence I could not do otherwise.”

“Well,” he said, “I don’t know but if you will lend me that brush, I think I will fix up a little, too.”

I handed him my ivory-backed hair-brush and shell comb. He said :

“Why, I can’t do anything with such a thing as that. It wouldn’t go through my hair. Now, if you have anything you comb your horse’s mane with, that might do.

“Now,” he continued, “I must tell you a story about my hair. When I was nominated for President at Chicago—as much to my surprise as to the surprise of the country—people naturally wanted to see how Abe Lincoln looked. I had been up to Chicago a year or two previous, and had been persuaded to have my photograph taken. An enterprising fellow in the Convention knowing of this, went to the photographer and bought the negative, and he was so expeditious about his scheme, that by the time the news got down to Springfield, where I lived, the boys were running through the streets crying :

“ ‘ Here’s a likeness of Abe Lincoln. Price, two shillings. Will look a great deal better when he gets his hair combed.’ ”

Before President Lincoln got through telling this story the butler had appeared a second time to announce dinner, and when we entered the dining-room the guests were all there and waiting. General Wool was very punctilious about matters of etiquette, and he said :

“ Colonel, you have detained me and my guests five minutes.”

“ I must crave your indulgence, General and gentlemen,” I replied, “ for having detained you by this breach of etiquette.”

The President sat at General Wool’s right hand looking at me with a comical expression on his face, as much as to say : “ The General is whipping me over your shoulders.” I could not help smiling, and General Wool said :

“ It seems hardly a matter for unseemly merri-ment, Colonel.”

“ For any breach of etiquette I may be guilty of,” I replied, “ as I am aide-in-waiting to the

President of the United States, the President is solely responsible."

Whereupon Secretary Chase remarked, with great dignity : " I have no doubt but possibly the President has been amusing the Colonel with some of his stories."

The French admiral, Marquis de Montagnac, was an intense admirer of the President, and he broke in :

" Well, vill not ze Praysident give us ze benefit of this story ?"

" I think it will keep until the dessert," I suggested.

At dessert the French marquis asked me if I would not request the President to repeat the story. I did so, and the President told the story again to the great amusement of every one at table.

I was so intensely in earnest over every effort to suppress the rebellion, that I had formed something of a prejudice against President Lincoln before I met him, from what I had heard and what was published in regard to the levity in

which he was said to indulge. But when I became intimately associated with him at Fort Monroe, I then appreciated the great qualities of the man. He was, in many respects, the most remarkable person that I have ever met in my life. His charity seemed to be boundless, and yet coupled with it there was a patience and a firmness and a courage that was almost limitless. He was by nature an intensely sad man, and all his story-telling and humor was a mere shield to cover his real nature.

The day after his arrival in Fort Monroe, he said to me :

“ I don't suppose you have a copy of Shakespeare here, any more than you have a copy of the Bible?”

“ You are mistaken, Mr. President,” I replied, “ for General Wool never goes to bed at night without reading and spouting Shakespeare ; and I have a copy of the Bible.”

“ I wonder if the General will lend me his Shakespeare?” he asked.

“ Most certainly,” I said.

The next day General Wool and most of his staff were off reviewing his command, and I was left in charge at headquarters receiving despatches and issuing orders. The President occupied my office, which communicated with the General's, and spent the morning reading Shakespeare. I was kept exceedingly busy, and after the lapse of two or three hours the President got up from his reading, and said to me :

“ You have been very busy, Colonel. Come in here and sit with me and rest, and I will read you some passages from Shakespeare.”

I went in, and we sat down opposite to each other at a little round table. He commenced by reading from “ Macbeth,” and then from “ King Lear,” and then from “ King John,” and I was surprised to find how well he rendered it all.

He read that part of “ King John” where Constance bewails to the king the loss of her son. I noticed as he read these pathetic passages that his voice became tremulous, and he seemed to be deeply moved. When he reached the end he

closed the book, laid it down, and turning to me, said :

“ Did you ever dream of some lost friend, and feel that you were having a sweet communion with him, and yet have a consciousness that it was not a reality ?”

It was a most singular situation, and I was deeply moved by his manner and the circumstances.

“ I think we all of us have some such experiences,” I replied.

“ That is the way I dream of my lost boy Willie,” said Mr. Lincoln. (He had just lost his boy, who was his idol.) Then he broke down in most convulsive weeping. It was most grievous and distressing to see this great, strong man give way to such emotion, and I was so sympathetically moved that I, too, broke down utterly. He sat there with his head bowed down on the table, and I quietly left the room.

He never alluded to this incident afterward, but night after night he used to ask me to go with him on the ramparts, and he would sit



there and talk to me with the utmost frankness of the graveness of the situation. He treated me always with the most genuine affection. He had given me a sacred confidence, and I grew to have a most intense affection for him.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### WITH GENERAL WOOL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THE EAST.

SHORTLY after my resignation General Wool was relieved of his command of the Department of Virginia, and was assigned to the Department of Maryland, with headquarters at Baltimore. Then, as the Government deemed it was very essential that there should be an influential command in the Department of the East, General Wool was later assigned to the Department of the East, which embraced the New England States, and the States of New York and New Jersey, with headquarters in New York City.

On his assuming this command I rejoined his staff as Volunteer Aide. The great importance of this command was in that it was a basis of supplies, and also of mustering additional troops into the service of the United States and sending them into the field. And, above all, it was especially

important in keeping down the disloyal sentiment which was so prevalent in New York City.

While General Wool was in command of the department Major-General Butler was relieved of his command in the city of New Orleans, although he had exhibited an ability in dealing with disloyalty which was more conspicuous than in the case of any other officer in the service. But it was charged that he was unnecessarily severe, and especially so in his treatment of women. As General Butler was an independent character and inclined to assume responsibilities that were not authorized at Washington, the Government, with an exhibition of weakness, yielded to demands, and he was relieved of the command.

The feeling among the loyal people of the North was that he was treated with great injustice, and on his appearing in New York City, with his staff, the citizens of New York tendered him a public reception, which was presided over by the Mayor of the city, Mr. George Opdyke, who had succeeded the disloyal Mayor, Fernando Wood. General Butler made his headquarters at the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

On my calling on General Butler at his headquarters he at once requested a private audience. In that audience he stated to me that he had been honored with the offer of a public reception, and he wanted me to consent to do him a favor. I replied that I should be very happy to do so, and what could I do to oblige him?

“ I want your promise that you will do me this favor,” said General Butler.

“ Well, of course I will make you the promise that I will do it,” I replied, “ because I know you will not ask anything that would be improper for me to do.”

“ Well, I want you to have General Wool attend my reception,” said General Butler, “ because I want to have his presence more than that of any man in the United States. I know he doesn’t like me, but I have my reasons for wanting his support more than that of any other man.”

“ You know General Wool’s peculiarity,” I said. “ You know that he is a man who has his prejudices, and that they are very difficult to overcome ; but I can see no reason why he should not attend your reception. Have you invited him ?”

“Yes,” answered General Butler. “Invitations have been sent to him and to every member of his staff. I know that you are the only man that can influence him to come, and I want you to induce him to attend.”

“I can see no good reason why he should not come,” I repeated, “and I will use my best efforts to accomplish what you desire.”

Going to headquarters that morning and looking over the correspondence, I observed this invention of General Butler. I reported it to General Wool, and said :

“I suppose you will accept it?”

“No ; you will decline it, sir,” he answered. “Why should I give my countenance to a man who has no military qualities?”

Appreciating the General’s peculiarities, I did not attempt to combat his prejudices then. I returned later with the correspondence that I had to answer, and suggested to him that I was embarrassed what to do about General Butler’s invitation. I did not see, I said, how he could decline a courteous invitation of that nature. General Wool still resisted, until finally I suggested

to him that neither he nor his friends could defend such action.

"Certainly," I said, "you have justified all of his severe measures with reference to the rebels. He is certainly not a military man, but he is a military governor, and you have justified him."

"Why are you so interested in my being present?" asked General Wool.

I related to him exactly what had taken place between General Butler and myself. "General Butler wants your presence at his reception more than that of any other man in the United States," I said. That was, of course, flattering to General Wool's vanity. Then I again urged that neither he nor his friends could justify a refusal of the courteous invitation. He could, if he liked, accept it and not go. He made no further reply to this, so I went to my office and accepted the invitation for him. After sending the acceptance by an orderly I told General Wool what I had done.

That evening we were dining at the New York Hotel with his nephew, Mr. Griswold, M.C., and at the dinner were also Mr. Sam Butterworth, of

Mississippi, and General Van Vliet, Quartermaster of our department. General Van Vliet, in the course of the dinner, said, in a supercilious way :

“ I have received an invitation to attend this reception to General Butler to-morrow evening.”

Mr. Butterworth spoke up : “ You certainly won't degrade yourself by going to a reception to that Butcher Butler.”

General Wool immediately broke in, saying :

“ You will go, General Van Vliet ; and, Mr. Butterworth, General Butler is a Major-General in the service of the United States, and no man must speak disrespectfully of him in my presence. You will attend that reception, General Van Vliet.” Then he continued, turning to me : “ Colonel, issue an order to every member of my staff to be in attendance at my headquarters, in full dress, at half-past seven to-morrow evening, to attend the reception to General Butler.”

We appeared at the meeting the following evening, and were assigned to most conspicuous places on the platform. General Butler made that remarkable speech in which he not only justified his own acts, but particularly showed to the American

people the perfidy of Great Britain. That part of his speech was particularly made for the benefit of General Wool, whose prejudice he very well knew, as General Wool yet carried in his back an English bullet, received in the War of 1812, which never had been extracted.

At the close of the speech there was immense applause, but without noticing the audience General Butler turned and advanced across the stage to General Wool, took him by the hands, and said :

“ General Wool, you have conferred a favor upon me by your support this evening which I can never forget.”

“ General Butler,” responded General Wool, “ every word you have uttered and all your acts I endorse.”

General Butler had captured General Wool.

In 1863 further requisitions were made upon the several States by the National Government for additional forces. The previous demand had been so great, and had invariably been fully supplied by volunteers, that there was a necessity



for a draft. Provost Marshals' offices were opened and a census taken for the purpose of drafting men into the United States service. This act was unpopular, and was resented, and finally the resentment culminated in the July riots, mainly on the part of the Irish, in the city of New York. The rioters exhibited their wrath by assaults upon innocent negroes, and by atrocious acts of barbarity. The invasion of the rebel army into the State of Pennsylvania just previous to this had compelled the Government to ask the States for every available man they had in the militia, and just before the draft riots all the militia regiments of New York had been sent to the support of Meade's army at Gettysburg. Consequently there was no recognized armed force in New York City to meet the emergency which arose in these riots.

Governor Seymour, of New York, a Democrat, whose sympathies were with the South, and who was by nature a timid and irresolute man, instead of meeting the violence exhibited in New York by decisive action, temporized, and being Governor of the State his course seriously embarrassed the action of the commanding general.

General Wool hesitated about declaring the city under martial law, but finally, by the loyalty and courage of the police force, under the direction of Thomas A. Acton, and with the aid of the very small forces of regular troops which were stationed at Governor's Island and at Fort Richmond, and by the use of the most positive measures, these terrible riots were put down.

So fearful was the penalty inflicted upon the rioters in the suppression of the riots, that it was not deemed good policy to make public anything like the full extent of it. The number of negroes and poor whites that were victims of the vengeance of the mob did not exceed 54 or 55. The rioters suffered, either directly by being killed outright at the time, or through being grievously wounded so that they died months after, to the extent of 1700 to 1800. They were dying all winter, but did not dare let it be known that they were wounded in the riots.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE UNION LEAGUE CLUB AND THE REBELLION.

PREVIOUS to this the State of Massachusetts had organized the first negro regiment. The Massachusetts authorities were advised by the loyal authorities of New York that it would not be safe to let this regiment pass through New York City. It was therefore sent forward by sea direct. That regiment was the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts, and it was mustered into the service by Major-General Wool, in the State of Massachusetts, at Reedville.

The State of Connecticut had also commenced to enlist negro troops to fill its quota. Governor Seymour, of the State of New York, had done nothing of the kind, and would only enlist whites.

The Union League Club of this city had passed a resolution to take measures to promote enlistments, and a committee was appointed, with

power, to carry the resolution into effect. Colonel George Bliss, Mr. Jackson S. Schultz, Mr. Alexander Van Rensselaer, two other gentlemen, and myself were appointed on the Committee. The Committee met and determined to establish recruiting stations, and, further, decided to give, in addition to the bounties given by the city and State, an additional fifty dollars for every person enlisted as a recruit in the United States Army.

This bounty system had been very pernicious in its workings, and was degenerating the whole military service. Not a few men had made practically a profession of enlisting to get these bounties and then deserting, and repeating the operation from State to State. It was demoralizing the whole volunteer service of the country. I objected at the moment to voting the bounty, urging that the whole system was demoralizing because it was destroying all patriotic feeling and sentiment, and was degrading the whole army into a mercenary service. Yet here we were having able-bodied negroes, who owed a service to this State, taken out of our State and filling

the quotas in other States more advanced in their views. We should, I urged, proceed to raise a regiment of black troops. After some time the Committee came over to my views, and it was determined to apply at once to Governor Seymour for authority to raise a regiment of negro troops. The Governor of the State refused permission.

Colonel Bliss and I then applied to the Secretary of War on behalf of the State for authority to raise a regiment of regular colored troops. The Secretary was disposed to refuse the request, on the ground that if the State of New York was so stupid as to insist that none but white men should fill its quota, he would let other States come in and take the negroes away from us. When we brought it to the attention of Secretary Stanton that continued refusal of this request to the great loyal body of the Union League Club, whose members were the strongest supporters the Government had in any city, both with men and money, would alienate an aid in support of the nation which he could little afford to lose, the Secretary being finally convinced of our position, issued the authorization.

Our proposition was ridiculed in the disloyal newspapers, but we raised a regiment, the Twentieth United States Regiment of colored troops, of a thousand men, in fifteen days. We then determined to correct public opinion, and decided that this regiment of colored troops should march through the streets of New York to embark, as a vindication of the laws of the nation, and as showing to the people of the world that we had not only put down the rioting, but at the same time had elevated the negroes. It was further determined that we should still further popularize this act by having the most distinguished women in New York present to the regiment a suit of colors. And perhaps no other regiment enlisted into the service of the United States had such a magnificent suit of colors as was presented by the ladies of New York to the Twentieth Regiment of United States colored troops. Mrs. John Jacob Astor was the chairman of the Committee.

It was further determined that these troops should land from Randall's Island at the foot of Twenty-sixth Street, on the East River, and march through the very district where the mob

had been most violent during the draft riots, to Union Square, in front of the club house, where the colors were to be presented. We applied to every bandmaster in New York to furnish a band to lead the regiment, and they all refused. We then got an order from the United States Government that the regular army band on Governor's Island should be sent for the purpose, and this band came over. The negro regiment had merely a drum corps of negro boys and a few buglers.

The band met the regiment at the corner of Twenty-sixth Street and Fourth Avenue. An immense crowd was following them. The troops were furnished with forty rounds of ammunition and their guns were charged, and they had instructions that if they were assaulted they were immediately to shoot down all who opposed them. They marched to the point mentioned above, and were halted there to meet the band. It was a very bad place to halt, as part of the troops were in one street and part in another. The Colonel recognized this fact and gave the order to move. The bandmaster asked what he should play.

“ Play anything !” said the colonel, and the band struck up some foreign air, and the black soldiers started off and the march was continued without mishap.

When the presentation of colors was made in front of the Union League Club-house, there was a splendid display there of the very best element of New York society. After the presentation the troops started for the place of embarkation, with 350 members of the club marching in front of the regiment. The enthusiasm was unbounded. Not a word or sound was uttered or a gesture made but of praise and applause. The march was a triumphant procession, and the enthusiasm was kept up at a wonderful pitch all the way to the foot of Canal Street, where the regiment embarked on a ship and went to Florida.

The club then raised two other colored regiments, until finally there was scarcely an able-bodied negro of military age living in the State of New York that had not been mustered into the service of the United States.

Thus was the loyalty of New York City vindi-



cated, and thereafter the loyal sentiment was dominant until the close of the war.

In the fall of 1863 General Wool was retired from the Army of the United States, under the laws which governed the period of service. He returned to his home at Troy, and died in the year 1869. After his retirement I left the service finally, but continued in private life as an active member of the Union League Club, whose great duty was to sustain the Government in every act for maintaining the integrity of the nation.

The services of the club in this regard were almost inestimable.

The origin of the organization of the Union League Club was somewhat peculiar and significant. On the breaking out of the war, as has been said, a large part of the influential sentiment of the city, in business and finance, was either disloyal or timid. The Union Club, which represented more than any other similar organization the social influence of the city, was also largely doubtful or disloyal.

The late Judah P. Benjamin was a member of the club, and immediately after secession he became the rebel Attorney-General, and later rebel Secretary of War. His club dues lapsed through his absence at the South, and three members of the club, Mr. Samuel Barlow, Mr. William Travers, and Mr. Augustus Schell, paid his dues, although this was a Union club and he a rebel in arms against the United States. This act produced great indignation in the minds of the loyal men in the club. Mr. Alfred Craven, Chief Engineer of the city, a Virginian by birth, was so indignant at this act that he denounced it in unmeasured terms. His action became known to these three gentlemen, and they resented it.

One day shortly afterward they were in the general club-room, with a great many other members, and were naturally smarting under Mr. Craven's criticisms, and were talking about the matter, when they observed Mr. Craven walking across Twenty-first Street, on his way to the clubhouse. They all three rushed out of the clubhouse and met him in the street, saying :

“ Mr. Craven, we hear you have spoken with

great disrespect of us, in criticising our action in paying Mr. Benjamin's club dues. We want an explanation."

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Craven, "we are in the street here, but if I have said anything that is not justifiable I will make explanation if you will walk with me to the club."

They all walked into the general club-room, where a great number of the members were assembled, everybody expecting a scene. Mr. Craven said :

"Gentlemen, I have spoken of this matter publicly, and if I have done wrong I must make an apology publicly. What do you complain of?"

"You have criticised our having paid this gentleman's dues," said one of the three gentlemen.

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Craven ; "and I repeat it again. He is a rebel in arms against the United States, and this is a Union club. He never was fit to have been a member of this club under any conditions. He never was a gentleman. More than that, he was a thief, and a dirty thief. I was at school with him. If any of you gentlemen

take exception to what I say I am at your service."

There was not any one of them ready to take exception ; but the matter was taken up by some seventy of us, and we resigned from the Union Club. We would not compromise our self-respect by any such association. From this incident chiefly resulted the formation of the Union League Club, which became the most powerful volunteer organization there was in this country. It had an influence for supplying the Government with money and credit which no other organization had. It was unstinted in its loyal exertions. It brought together the presidents of banks, trust companies, and other financial institutions, who rendered the Government and the Union cause the greatest of service ; for there was a period when the Government's funds and credit wanted a great deal more recruiting than the army did. These gentlemen took a broad view of the situation, knowing that if the public credit was gone private credit would soon go also, and they gave the Government every support in its times of greatest need. By their acts and influence, being

the representatives of the moneyed powers of this city, loans were made to the Government, and what was done here gave credit and confidence to the moneyed interests of the whole country.

The club never faltered in its ~~great~~ services, the Government was never without its support, and the amount of unselfish work done by its members was hardly to be estimated. It is that ~~great~~ fact that has given the Union League Club such ~~great~~ influence, and deservedly so, in public affairs from that time to this.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### AT LAKE CHAMPLAIN AND BURLINGTON.

ON General Wool's retirement I returned to my place at Burlington, Vt., resuming there the active management of the Champlain Transportation Company. The terminals of the company were Rouse's Point on the North and Whitehall on the South.

The rebel government was exerting every possible influence to obtain from England a recognition of the independence of the seceded States. Captain Wilkes, in command of the United States steamer *San Jacinto*, had, late in the year 1861, boarded an English passenger vessel, the steamer *Trent*, and taken prisoners therefrom Messrs. Slidell and Mason, diplomatic agents of the rebel government on their way to England. This was an utterly indefensible act, as it was this very matter of the right of search, which Great Britain

had practised upon our commerce, which led to the War of 1812-15. The British Government made a demand upon this nation for an apology, for the restitution of the prisoners into English custody, and for an indemnity, and to enforce that demand had sent a fleet upon our coasts, and also quite a large force of the army into Canada.

The rebel government, presuming upon this irritation on the part of Great Britain, managed to send a few of their influential men to the city of Montreal, where they were supported by a number of desperate men from the South already harbored in that city, with the purpose of increasing this irritation between Great Britain and the United States, and further compromising the strained relations of the two countries, by raiding our frontier towns and railroads from Canada, and with the further purpose of diverting soldiers from the army to the frontier. The Vermont Central Railroad and the Ogdensburg Railroad, with the Champlain Transportation Company, organized a force of detectives to work in Mon-

treal and to keep us informed of the doings and purposes of the rebels there.

The information we received from them was laid before the Secretary of War, and he was urged to detail a small force of United States soldiers to the frontier to guard against the threatened invasion. This he declined to do, either underrating our apprehension, or because the imperative demand at the front was so great that he was not disposed to weaken our forces in the presence of the enemy.

In the emergency I determined to arm the crews of our boats, to establish man-o'-war discipline on them, and to adopt such other measures as would protect our towns from raids by this lawless, rebel combination. An attempt was made to seize one of our boats, but on the raiders finding that we were fully prepared to meet them and to defend our property, they retreated back beyond the Canadian lines. The following week Bennet H. Young, with a force of about fifty men, raided the town of St. Albans, Vt., robbing the banks and intimidating the townspeople, and escaped back to Canada unmolested.



This, with the exception of being identified with the great Metropolitan Fair in New York City, as one of the Executive Committee, was the last personal public service that I rendered during the rebellion.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### SOME OTHER REMINISCENCES AND PERSONAL EPISODES.

IN 1866 I was nominated for Congress by the Republican Party in New York City, but declined the nomination. On reassembling, the Convention declared that while it might be assumed that an individual had such a right to decline, yet there was a sovereign right in the people to insist on making him a candidate. The Eighth Congressional District, in which I was nominated to run against Mr. James Brooks, was Democratic by an average usual majority of about 12,000. But the loyal electors wanted a candidate who had been in the army, and I was supported with great cordiality, and reduced the majority down to 5606.

From the *New York Commercial Advertiser*, 1885.

### NEW YORK POLITICS.

It is the opinion of many shrewd politicians of both parties in the State of New York that if the

Republicans make a judicious selection of a standard-bearer—one on whom the several wings and factions can cordially unite—they can carry the State, and restore it to the Republican ranks, this fall. The names of possible nominees for Governor are beginning to be canvassed, and the importance of the issues at stake ought to, and we trust will, compel the selection of the best man. The *New York Sun* of Monday gives the following list of possible candidates: Hon. Frank Hiscock, General J. B. Carr, the Hon. James W. Wadsworth, the Hon. S. S. Rogers, of Buffalo, Mayor Low, of Brooklyn, and Colonel Le Grand B. Cannon, of New York. Each gentleman is commended, but the *Sun* suggests that Mr. Rogers cannot be nominated because he supported Mr. Cleveland against Judge Folger, and Mr. Roosevelt, while “no slouch as a public man,” will “have to wait till his beard is longer.” Of Colonel Cannon, whom it calls the business man’s candidate, the *Sun* says:

“He resides in this city, and is variously engaged in railroads, in mining and manufacturing iron, and in other large enterprises. A protec-

tionist in political economy, he is one of the natural leaders of his party, though, so far as we are aware, he has never held any political office. His military title was gained by actual service in the Civil War, and his qualities of intellect and character give him a great deal of weight in political as well as business affairs. He always votes the straight Republican ticket. Though not a Blaine man, his support of Blaine last year was unqualified and most efficient."

The *Troy Times* says :

" This is the first time we have seen Colonel Cannon's name mentioned in this connection, but it may not be the last time. The Colonel is a native of Troy, and has large business interests here and in northern New York, as well as in the metropolis. Colonel Cannon would make a strong candidate before the people, and a good governor if elected, as we are not without hope the Republican nominee, whosoever he may be, will be."

Colonel Cannon would undoubtedly make a very strong candidate ; and we incline to the belief that he would carry the State, if it can be carried this year by any Republican. He is a

man whose integrity, independence, patriotism, public spirit, and executive capacity are beyond dispute. He is widely known and as widely respected ; and he would make a clean, high-minded, and able governor. Can our brother Republicans of the Empire State do better than to place his name at the head of their ticket ?

From the *Malone Republican*, 1885.

Among the men prominently named in connection with the Republican nomination for Governor of New York this fall is Colonel Le Grand B. Cannon, of New York. Such a choice would be one of the wisest that could be made. Colonel Cannon earned his title in actual service. He is one of the foremost business men of the State. He is a Republican always and with zeal for the cause. A year ago he warmly favored the nomination of Mr. Arthur and went to Chicago in his interest ; but when the convention decided against him he never for one moment sulked. On the contrary, he gave of his means, time, and influence in large measure to promote the candidacy of Mr. Blaine. In this view, it would be difficult to find a man

less likely than he to excite factional animosities, while as a business man he would command a large and earnest support throughout the State. He is interested in great mining industries in this section, which would make him especially strong as a candidate in the northern counties. As the canvass develops, some other choice may seem preferable to that of Colonel Cannon, but at this date it would be hard to name a man in whom more elements of strength are united than he possesses.

#### ON THE VIENNA EXHIBITION COMMISSION.

In the year 1872, when the great International Exposition of Vienna was held, I was in Europe with my family. The Commission appointed by the United States Government to have charge of the interests of this country in that Exposition was most unfortunate in its make-up. Its members were thoroughly incompetent for the positions they held, and their doings were attended with a great deal of disgraceful scandal. So serious did the condition of affairs become that Mr. John Jay, our Minister to Austria, was ordered

by the Government to make a careful inquiry into the acts and general condition of this Commission. This was done through a Commission of Investigation. The evidence of incompetence and of dishonesty was so conspicuous, that it would have been a national disgrace if it had been permitted to continue, or even if it became public. I was at the time in Rome, spending the winter there with my family.

I knew Mr. Jay intimately, and he repeatedly urged me by letter to come to Vienna. Finally, on his continued solicitation, I went there. On my arrival he showed me, in confidence, the condition of affairs, and urged upon me, as a matter of duty to the country, that I should consent to take the office of Chief Commissioner. Feeling that the duties involved in conducting a great department charged with exhibiting the evidences of our national industries, which were very numerous and very great, and especially with the system of the Commission utterly disorganized, would be a duty which I was incompetent to discharge ; and knowing, also, that it would involve my giving up, with my family, nearly a year of

my time, and my health being impaired, too, I utterly refused to accept the office. Eventually, however, as the time for opening the Exhibition was near at hand, and realizing the national disgrace which would attach to our appearing before the world with so demoralized an organization, I consented to become Chief Provisional Commissioner provided I could name my associates.

Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, Mr. William H. Aspinwall, and Mr. Spang, of Pittsburgh, consented to serve with me as temporary Commissioners, and the Government at Washington immediately, by cable, removed the Commissioners, and we took possession of all American affairs in connection with the Exposition. So demoralized was the Commission in every respect, that we found it necessary to dismiss all the clerks who had been in its employ, and to obtain a considerable number of German and English clerks in whom we had confidence, to carry on the operations of the department. Even then, so brief was the period between our assuming office and the opening of the Exposition, that we decided to inform the Imperial Government that, on account of being



the most distant nation, the American Department was not sufficiently completed to open on the appointed opening day, and it was not opened until some time after the formal opening of the Exposition.

We remained at Vienna for a month or six weeks, performing a most arduous duty under most embarrassing circumstances, and finally succeeded in getting the department into fair working condition, when the Government, at our solicitation, relieved us by the appointment of Mr. Jackson S. Schultz as Chief Commissioner, in which office he continued, conducting the department to the close of the Exposition with ability and honor and credit.

This was my last public service.

#### THE CHAMPLAIN TRANSPORTATION COMPANY.

In the year 1854 occurred the failure of R. & G. L. Schuyler, who constructed and controlled the Saratoga and Washington Railroad, and the consequent insolvency of that corporation by going into receivership. I was the holder of quite an amount of the second mortgage bonds,

and a foreclosure suit was instituted which resulted in the sale of the road and its reorganization under the title of the Saratoga and Whitehall Railroad Company, the second mortgage bonds being represented in the reorganization as stock. Mr. J. Phillips Phoenix, of this city, and myself were constituted a Committee by the bondholders to conduct the foreclosure and reorganization, and to buy the property under the decree of foreclosure. This resulted in the company being reorganized and the management delegated to me.

The connection of this company on the North, at Whitehall, was with the Champlain Transportation Company, controlled by the late Daniel Drew and his associates. Their passenger and freight tariff was excessive, and the service of the line was indifferent. These conditions seriously affected the railroad company's business. After repeated protests, without result, it was determined by myself and associates to build a competing boat on the lake. This resulted in Mr. Drew and his associates selling to me and my associates a controlling interest in the steamboat

company, which for many years had not been profitable.

On my assuming the management, incompetent and irresponsible officers were removed, the traffic rates reduced, and the steward's department improved. As a result, public patronage was steadily diverted from the Rutland Railroad Company to this line, and from that day forward it became a most profitable property. For thirty-eight years its average dividends, made upon the stock, have been 15 per cent per annum, and a surplus has been accumulated of over 170 per cent on the capital stock to this day.

Visiting Burlington in the year 1856, to examine the property of the steamboat company thus purchased, I was greatly impressed with the beauty and attractiveness of the country, with the grand panorama of lake and valley and mountains, and with the sterling qualities of the people, which resulted in my purchasing a property on the heights of the city for a summer home. I rented a furnished house, near the college, in 1857-58, meanwhile building on and improving

the purchase. In 1859 I occupied my house, "Overlake," which for so many years since I have so much enjoyed, and which I am conscious prolonged for many years the life of my dear wife.

The climate of Burlington, indeed of the whole of the Champlain Valley, is dry, invigorating, free from malarious disease, and equable. The region thereabout is favored with a longer exemption from frost than is that of the Hudson River, which is proven by the great fruit production of the region. Joined with all this, the intelligent, sturdy qualities of the people of Vermont, and the great loyalty and honesty and frugality of the management of public affairs, render it a most desirable and delightful home.

#### JOHN BROWN'S FARM AND GRAVE.

In the year 1872 Miss Kate Field, being in the Adirondack region, visited the grave of John Brown, at North Elba. She found but one member of John Brown's family, a son-in-law, living there, and he was desirous of moving to the West to join the remaining members of the family, and

wished to sell the farm on which the grave is located. Miss Field was deeply impressed with the circumstances and the condition of affairs, and came to the city of New York and induced several patriotic men to contribute to a fund for the purpose of purchasing this property and preserving it. Twenty subscribers, of whom I was one, made up the necessary amount, and the farm was bought, the object being to protect the grave and perpetuate the memory of the famous martyr to liberty. The property was purchased, and to this year, 1895, was held by the original subscribers or their heirs, one half of the original subscribers being now dead.

Appreciating the hazard of possible complications that might arise in reference to the ownership of the property, and with a desire to ensure the carrying out, in the best possible way, of the intentions of the gentlemen who bought it, Miss Field and myself took steps early in the year 1895 to secure the consent of all those interested in the ownership to donate the farm to the State of New York, for a public possession. This was done, with a limitation in the deed of gift that the prop-

erty shall never be alienated or encumbered, but that the grave shall be preserved, and that an enduring tablet be erected near it bearing the names of the donors.

This property at North Elba contains about 250 acres, and will become part of the great Adirondack Park. Thus will the purpose of the patriotic purchasers of the property be ensured, and the place itself be an enduring monument to the memory of the rugged, heroic man whose name is one of the greatest and brightest in the history of America ~~and the world.~~

### VARIOUS INCIDENTS RETOLD.

From the *Burlington Free Press*.

#### THE DIFFERENCE.

It is frequently said that "true hospitality is found alone among the Chivalry." This was once supposed to mean something, and had many believers. But since the war there have been grave doubts as to the correctness of this statement. We do not propose to go deeply into the subject, but note an instance of the difference

between the "cold-blooded Northerner" and the "hospitable Southern gentleman."

During the winter of 1861-62 and the following spring, the rebels had about 10,000 Union prisoners confined in loathsome jails or noisome dungeons. Ragged and hungry and sick, they were ever thinking of home and friends. Letters were truly like angels' visits. All at once they were cut off from receiving them by an order requiring *the postage in all cases where letters came to or from prisoners of war to be paid in advance with coin.*

Thousands of letters were detained at Norfolk, by the *express order* of the *rebel Postmaster-General*, because they contained no silver five-cent pieces to pay the postage. The prisoners heard of this and remonstrated, but all in vain. For nearly three months they were deprived of all correspondence with home; then letters which had been kept at Norfolk for months were forwarded, and thousands were delivered to the anxious and home-sick prisoners. "How was it brought about?" was the anxious inquiry of all. They were told that the "rebel government had paid the postage." It had a profound effect. But unfortunately for

the good opinion of the rebel leaders, General Huger, the rebel commander at Norfolk, had the honor to write General Wilcox, then a prisoner, regretting the long delay of our letters, and stating that to the kind offices of Colonel Le Grand B. Cannon, of General Wool's staff, we were indebted for them at that time. It appeared that Colonel Cannon, on learning that the prisoners' letters were detained for want of silver enclosed, the requirement of which was not then understood at the North, went over to Norfolk with a flag of truce, found out that the difficulty was the want of a few hundred dollars in silver by the rebel Postmaster-General, paid the money out of his own pocket, and gladdened the hearts of the prisoners with news from home.

What makes the contrast still more marked is the fact that, while the rebel officers knew it was a Northern man who had out of his own private purse paid the demand of the rebel government, they were willing to accept from the prisoners their gratitude for what they had never done, and to rob them further on the strength of it. With the natural modesty of the true gentleman, the



Northern man never even mentioned the matter, so that to this day few of our officers and men know to whose efforts and kindness they owe the change in the rebel mail arrangements. And this is probably the first time the fact was ever made public.

From the *Troy Times*.

“The *New York Commercial* says Le Grand B. Cannon, who is mentioned in connection with the nomination for Governor, is a small man physically, but it is not stated whether he is a small bore.”—*New York World*.

Colonel Le Grand B. Cannon, we believe, is a native of Troy—at all events he resided here for many years, and has numerous friends and relatives here. His father was the founder of the iron-rolling mills in this city, and built the Cannon Place block, which bears his name. He was a leading citizen in Troy, and prominently connected with some of its heaviest business enterprises. Colonel Cannon is a director of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company, and is wealthy. He derives his title of Colonel from having served

on General Wool's staff during the late war, when that officer was in command at Fortress Monroe. Colonel Cannon has an elegant summer residence at Burlington, Vt., and is interested in steamers on Lake Champlain and in railroads in that State and in northern New York. He is a prominent member of the Union League Club, and took an active part in the election of William M. Evarts to the United States Senate. He has been an active Republican since he left the old Whig Party, and is a man of integrity, character, energy, and brains, and would fill the bill for Governor with great acceptability to the public. He has excellent capacities for the place, and his nomination would be popular, and a strong one.

From the New York *Tribune*.

Le Grand B. Cannon is frequently talked about as an available Republican candidate for Governor. He would have the Union League solidly at his back. I heard the other day a story of one of Colonel Cannon's war experiences, in which the late William E. Dodge was a figure. He was chief of staff for General Wool at the outbreak of

the war, and did as much as any other one man in New York to secure the equipment and despatch of troops to the seat of war. On Sunday, April 28th, 1861, a little over a week after the assault by the Baltimore mob on the Massachusetts Sixth, Colonel Cannon went to the house of a friend in Fifth Avenue to state an urgent case to him. In substance he said to him : “ You are well acquainted with William E. Dodge—his intimate friend. Our great need here is arms for our troops. I have found in Canada 25,000 stand of arms, which we can get as a loan if we give an indemnity bond for their return or that they will be paid for. I can get all the signers I want if Mr. Dodge will sign it. I know he would sign it on Monday. But I know how strict he is about Sunday. Yet the matter is urgent. If I can get the bond ready to-night, I can have the arms here in three days.” The friend undertook to go with him to Mr. Dodge. The Colonel stated his case there as eloquently as before, and Mr. Dodge turned to his desk and signed the bond, saying as he did so : “ I do not see how I could do a better deed on Sunday.”

From the New York *Tribune*.

People who meet Colonel Le Grand B. Cannon on the street or in his business office, casually, do not become familiar with the jolly, sociable nature under that dignified exterior. He is a man of perhaps nearly the allotted threescore and ten, rather below the medium stature, with delicately outlined and neatly trimmed gray side-whiskers. Although he wears a serious countenance he is fond of social gatherings where moderation is the rule, and makes himself as entertaining with the young members as with those nearer his own age. He can make an interesting after-dinner speech, and has a fund of stories always on hand to entertain and enliven his listeners. It is especially among his soldier companions that Colonel Cannon is always chatty, and he delights to grasp the hands of his old comrades of the Civil War. It is only recently that he joined the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, and at the last meeting he related the following incident of the Fenian uprising. General Sweeney commanded the Fenian army that crossed the Canadian border. United States

Marshal Foster, of Vermont, captured General Sweeney and dispersed the army. Foster was Colonel of one of the Vermont regiments in the war, and was promoted to be a Brigadier-General. He was a Titan in stature and strength, but was modest, quiet, and singularly engaging. Yet he was full of resources, and evidently had a contempt for the Fenian raiders. He followed their forces to the Canadian border, and reached the field after they had engaged the Canadian troops. He quietly entered their lines, picked up General Sweeney, put him into a carriage he had ready at hand, and then drove to St. Albans, with the army following their prisoner commander. Perhaps this is the first and only instance on record of an entire army being captured by a civil officer. Generals Meade and McDowell, who arrived the day after the affair, declared that this was the boldest instance of grand strategy on record.

From the *New York Sun*, April 11, 1885.

The Union League Club comes squarely up to the mark, avowing itself to be what it is, a thoroughgoing Republican organization. This is a

sincere and manly expression, and we congratulate the club on having made it. More than all, we congratulate Colonel Le Grand B. Cannon on his carrying through such a declaration. The Republican Party owes a great deal to Colonel Cannon, but he has rarely rendered it a greater service than in this instance. A brave, accomplished, earnest, and most intelligent and fearless gentleman, such a leader is of priceless value to his party. Would there were many such, Democrats as well as Republicans ! The country would be the gainer, no matter in which party they might predominate.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### IN CONCLUSION.

FROM earliest manhood I have taken an active interest in business, and especially in public affairs, recognizing that the theory of republican government assumes that every citizen shall be a politician, and shall take an interest in public affairs. A member of the Whig Party from its organization, I was afterward, and have ever since been, associated with the Republican Party, whose cardinal principles are a protective policy designed to develop our resources, a stable currency, and a uniform standard of value. The enduring record of the Republican Party will be its subduing the Rebellion, and its able administration of public affairs for thirty successive years, in restoring harmony, elevating the public credit to a higher standard than enjoyed by any other nation, and the development of our industries by protective duties, all of which have ensured general national

prosperity, and by which we are the largest producing and wealthiest nation on earth. But such a result could only have been achieved by the people electing to legislative and executive office men of highest intelligence, thoroughly national, and in all their legislation governed by practical views and not by the unstable theories of a school of political adventurers, who assert that political economy is an exact science and can be successfully applied to all nations and to all conditions of business in national life.

I especially desire to impress on my family that society divides itself practically on the same lines under any system of government, be it imperial, monarchical, or republican. People of property, business ability, progress, the educated, religious and law-abiding, on one side ; and the ignorant, poor, lawless, agitators and revolutionists on the other. The latter have had temporary successes, as they will have in the future ; but intelligence and property will assert themselves in the end, and not infrequently, perhaps, by curtailing personal rights in government.

The decline and decay of nations has been the



result of excessive individual wealth, and its abuse in leading to luxury, selfishness, frivolity, and debauchery, to the exclusive gratification of private pleasure and the neglect of public duty, which justly produces irritation with the masses, and leads in the end to violent resistance to lawful authority. It may be safely assumed that all unjust legislation and perversions of law, all the corruption, all the tyranny and brigandage of the police in our city, and the venality of our courts, has been the outgrowth of the neglect and indifference of the better class of our people of their public, political duties, of a selfish and almost criminal neglect of attendance at political meetings and the polls. Only when their liberty, property, and lives are threatened by widespread corruption are they aroused. Then they find it no easy matter to drive out the villains they have permitted to govern them.

It should be remembered that it is a sovereign duty to serve the country, in war or peace, and that under a republic individual responsibility is paramount, and is measured only by opportunities. If his duties are faithfully discharged the

individual is respected and his influence is large, and society is comparatively safe. I hope, therefore, that these truths will be remembered and practised by my family. I would especially impress upon them that the disturbing elements of society are at this very time seriously agitating the nations of the earth, and therefore the duty, the sovereign duty of every thoughtful person, more especially in a republic, never to forget or neglect his public political duties as a citizen, is emphatic and vital.

I hope these important truths will be remembered and practised by my family. It is most commendable by honest means to secure property, but it should not be forgotten that there is more satisfaction in the acquisition of wealth than in its possession. Commercial success with not a few begets an ambition for social recognition, not by any means difficult of attainment in the present low tone of fashionable society, which fails to discriminate between notoriety and reputation. All such low views and aims I desire my family and friends to guard against and to spurn, re-

membering that self-respect is a valuable possession.

I further desire especially to remind my family that, following the habits of my ancestors, I have always been active in business life, principally, in my day, in corporations as director or manager. This disposition to active work in the affairs of the world I inherited from my ancestors, who for two centuries and a half have been prominent in business life, and who have been uniformly successful, there never having been an instance of failure or insolvency in their history from generation to generation ; a result which could only have been accomplished by prudence and economy, and particularly by always keeping their personal expenditure within their earnings and income. Knowing that with the most intelligent sagacity in investment the personal securities of the highest credit of one year may become worthless, by a change of conditions, in the course of a few succeeding years, the only safety for ensuring such results is that annually a surplus should be accumulated from the income to meet the possible

contingencies of investment in the future. This experience is universal, and recognizing the fact that the necessary expenses of an increasing and growing family increase measurably with the age and condition of its members, the only possible safety for the future is that the personal expenses of a family shall always be within the annual income. By following this rule inflexibly, disaster cannot overtake a family.

The philosophy of life is governed by rules which cannot be violated with impunity. Being endowed with a fair average of health, it is of the first importance that the mind and body should be employed in some active work, and that work should be relieved by rest and by diversion, in the direction of healthful exercise or social enjoyment, above all with one's own family. Home should be the centre of life.

To keep up with the progress of the age, it is important to find one's associations with the younger generation. To keep young one must keep with the young. I have as far as possible

avoided old fogies, and found my pleasures with my juniors. There is a double compensation in this. Youth has a natural respect for its seniors, which serves to temper youthful impulses and extravagancies ; and age is freshened by the associations of youth.

Live as far as possible a natural life ; rise early and go to bed early—don't turn day into night and night into day ; thus you will preserve digestion and the nervous system, secure health, and prolong life. Don't cultivate disease by imagining that you are afflicted with a succession of ailments. Disease can be cultivated by the imagination about as readily as flowers can by glass and water. Beat disease by the will rather than by the apothecary. Don't have time to be sick. Statistics prove that only five per cent of the ills of life are averted by the doctor. The doctor is more a luxury than a necessity. The laboratory and the microscope are discovering the origin of disease, and how to prevent it. A venerable German physician, in active practice in his hundred and second year, being asked what rules of health

he had practised, replied that he had violated every rule of health that he had ever heard of. In other words, he had never cultivated disease.

In short, be brave and not a coward. Life is of little value if one is in constant apprehension that it is threatened.







No. 1726 Sect. 0 Shelf 3

## CONTENTS

Lincoln National Life Foundation  
Collateral Lincoln Library

